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Chair: Ms. Martinic ..... (Argentina)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I declare open the 2017 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

(*spoke in English*)

The Disarmament Commission was established in 1978 at the tenth special session of the General Assembly to consider and make recommendations on various problems in the area of disarmament and to follow up the relevant decisions and recommendations of the special session devoted to disarmament. Since its establishment, the Commission has been able to produce 16 sets of key recommendations, guidelines and principles ranging from objective information on military matters to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, to name just two.

The 2017 session of the Commission represents the last phase of the current three-year cycle. The Commission is expected to complete the work of the two Working Groups by agreeing on consensus documents on their respective agenda items — the first recommendations being for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the second for practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

I encourage delegations to fully participate in the discussions in the two Working Groups, listen to one another's concerns with an open mind and try to see others' interests as their own. In my humble opinion, that is the only way to foster the mutual understanding needed to address the issues before us. Nuclear disarmament and confidence-building are at the core of international peace and security. I am confident that member States will be up to their responsibility to make full use of this body to help achieve the very basic but necessary common ground that we need in the area of disarmament.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

On behalf of all the members of the Commission, before we discuss the first item on the agenda, I would like to warmly welcome Mr. Kim Won-soo, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs at the Office for Disarmament Affairs. I would like to thank and welcome him and his team for the great support they will be providing to the Commission during this session.

It gives me pleasure to give the floor to Mr. Kim Won-soo.

Mr. Kim Won-soo: I thank you, Madam Chair, for the kind words addressed to my Office. At the outset, I would like to start with three things.

The first is to thank you, Madam, for accepting what is, as you said, the challenging task of concluding this session of the Disarmament Commission. The second is to thank the departing Chair, Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu, for his dedicated stewardship of last year's session and the intersessional consultations

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that followed it. And the third is to thank the departing Chairs of the two Working Groups, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov, now Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, and Mr. Bouchaib Eloumni of Morocco, both of whom skilfully presided over the Groups' work during the past two sessions. They have now taken on prominent new assignments, which I believe they fully deserve.

The year 2017 is the final year of this body's three-year cycle. The Commission is expected to complete the work of its two Working Groups and provide recommendations to the General Assembly. This year also marks 65 years since the first Disarmament Commission was established by the General Assembly. Its mission was to address the international community's anxiety at the general lack of confidence plaguing the world and leading to the burden of increasing armaments. This mission is valid now more than ever. We are witnessing rising global and regional tensions; new and destabilizing arms competitions in both strategic and conventional weapons; worrying policy trends that threaten to roll back the gains made since the end of the Cold War; and a dearth of outcomes from disarmament institutions, including this body. We need to work harder to reverse these trends.

We have seen the emergence of new technologies with the potential to have a negative impact on international peace and security. They include both high-end weapons systems and new applications for the revolutionary technologies that have primarily been pursued by both private and academic sectors. From cybersecurity and artificial intelligence to hypersonic missiles, these new technologies also create a double blurring of the line, both between strategic and non-strategic weapons and between nuclear and non-nuclear conventional weapons.

Addressing these new trends requires a comprehensive approach. In this connection, our goals have always been broader than eliminating or restricting single categories of weapons. Disarmament was meant as an integrated approach to address the larger problem of war and to facilitate arrangements for the collective maintenance of international security. This is the logic around which the concept of general and complete disarmament is built. Creating a new paradigm for sustainable security requires looking at how to modernize the concept of general and complete disarmament in the twenty-first century.

This is the approach also taken by the original Disarmament Commission. This session has an opportunity to revitalize this approach by considering the recommendations of the two Working Groups holistically, as mutually reinforcing elements of a greater whole. As the only universal deliberative body, the Commission can, through its inclusive engagement and with a willingness to seek compromise and exercise flexibility, make a meaningful contribution to the revitalization of general and complete disarmament.

Now I would like to turn to the issues related to outer space. It is an area that is especially ripe for consideration. Its recent history is promising. The Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities, established by the General Assembly at Russia's initiative in 2012, successfully concluded its work in 2013. The subsequent General Assembly resolution 70/53 was jointly sponsored by China, the Russian Federation and the United States — a rare display of unity on a strategic issue of such magnitude.

The First and Fourth Committee held their first-ever ad hoc meeting on addressing the challenges of outer space security and sustainability in October 2015. The meeting showed how much work remains to be done to reconcile competing views. Nevertheless, it provided a useful opportunity to debate these differences and search for common ground.

I sincerely appreciate the efforts made by former Chairs — Ambassadors Drobnjak of Croatia, Seck of Senegal and Tevi of Vanuatu — to bring this issue before the Commission and for deepening the discussions and cooperation between the communities concerned with the safety and security of outer space efforts. I also commend the flexibility shown by all States in allowing this to happen. Achieving the implementation of outer space transparency and confidence-building measures would be an indispensable step towards the prevention of an arms race in outer space. As outer space is our common heritage, the issue deserves to be addressed in a universal body.

In February, the Secretary-General issued a report (A/72/65) on the implementation of outer space transparency and confidence-building measures by the United Nations system. We hope that the report and the gaps it identifies will serve as a practical guide for representatives' informal discussions. Those discussions may help us to explore various

ideas to ensure that space remains free of conflict and unsustainable practices. I look forward to productive deliberations on the issue.

I would like to conclude by noting that there are high expectations for progress in 2017, including from this body. A number of important events are taking place this year, especially for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The Disarmament Commission falls exactly in the middle of two of them: the negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, and the commencement of the crucial 2020 review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We therefore have good opportunities for action on numerous fronts in a busy disarmament agenda. Success in the deliberations of the Commission can set a positive tone and provide new impetus for achieving progress in our collective efforts to strengthen disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation.

I wish delegations the best for a fruitful session.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Kim for his statement.

Adoption of the provisional agenda for the 2017 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Members of the Commission may recall that, at its organizational session on 13 February, the Commission took note of the provisional agenda for the 2017 substantive session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.78.

Unless I hear any objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the agenda as contained in document A/CN.10/L.78.

The agenda was adopted.

Election of other officers

As members will recall, the Commission has yet to elect six Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur from regional groups. I was informed that consultations are still ongoing within the Group of African States on possible candidates for the posts of Vice-Chairs. Therefore, we will take up the election of Vice-Chairs from this Group at a later stage.

At the same time, I am pleased to inform the Commission of the following endorsements it has received. The Group of Eastern European States has endorsed the candidatures of Ms. Anda Grinberga, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Latvia, and Ms. Rosita Šorytė, Minister Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Lithuania, as Vice-Chairs from the Group of Eastern European States.

The Group of Latin American and Caribbean States has endorsed the candidature of Ms. Asha Challenger, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Antigua and Barbuda, as Vice-Chair from the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. The Group of Asia-Pacific States has endorsed the candidatures of Mr. Yasar Ammar, Second Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Pakistan, as Vice-Chair, and of Mr. Seyed Robatjazi, First Secretary at the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as Rapporteur from the Group of Asia Pacific States.

If there are no objections, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect by acclamation Ms. Asha Challenger of Antigua and Barbuda, Ms. Anda Grinberga of Latvia, Ms. Rosita Šorytė of Lithuania and Mr. Yassar Amar of Pakistan as Vice-Chairs, and Mr. Seyed Robatjazi of the Islamic Republic of Iran as Rapporteur of the Commission for the 2017 substantive session.

It was so decided.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Commission, allow me warmly to congratulate the newly elected members of the Bureau and wish them success in the discharge of their duties. I am sure that they will make an important contribution to the smooth operation of the Commission this year. I would like to thank them in advance for their support and counsel.

It is my understanding that there is general agreement on the candidatures of the Working Group Chairs. If there are no objections, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect by acclamation Mr. Wilmer Méndez, Minister-Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as Chair of Working Group I, and Ms. Lachezara Stoeva, Counsellor, Deputy Permanent Representative of Bulgaria, as Chair of Working Group II.

It was so decided.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): Once again, on behalf of the Commission I should like to congratulate the Chairs of the Working Groups. I am grateful to them for taking up the challenge of presiding over their

respective groups in this final year of considering the issue. I am quite certain that they will carry out their tasks with wisdom.

Organization of work

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): I should now like to draw the Commission's attention to the draft schedule of meetings, as contained in document A/CN.10/2017/CRP.1, which was circulated previously, and which has also been distributed this morning in the room. As members will have noted, three plenary meetings have been scheduled for the general exchange of views. A further 11 meetings have been allocated for each Working Group on an equitable basis. As members will recall, this schedule is based on the practice of previous years in which we allocated the number of meetings for each Working Group. By the same token, keeping in mind the need to make the best use of time and resources available to us, it is deemed appropriate to return to the practice of having a plenary session of the Commission halfway through the session in order to provide an opportunity to hear how the Working Groups are proceeding. That will prove useful for all delegations, in particular the smallest of them.

Moreover, and as members will recall, pursuant to resolution 71/82 the Commission will hold informal discussions on transparency- and confidence-building measures in outer space tentatively during the second and third weeks of our discussions. In that regard, I would like to draw the Commission's attention to the issue of the utilization factor and to share with members some numbers regarding the Commission's level of efficiency in the use of conference service.

As members are aware, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/9, intergovernmental bodies such as the Commission are mandated to achieve the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources. The average utilization factor of the Commission for the past 10 years has been 66 per cent. I repeat: the average utilization factor of the Commission for the past 10 years has been 66 per cent, which is below the 80 per cent benchmark. The good news is that the utilization factor last year stood at 76 per cent, which is much closer to the benchmark. I hope that members will join me in committing ourselves to do our best to ensure that the Commission optimizes its use of conference resources. That includes, inter alia, commencing and adjourning the meetings on time and using to the fullest extent possible all the time allocated for our meetings.

May I take it that the Commission wishes to take note of the schedule of meetings, as contained in document A/CN.10/2017/CRP.1?

It was so decided.

General debate

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): The Commission will now start the general exchange of views, based on the list of speakers inscribed for the general debate. I would urge those delegations that have not yet done so to enter their names on the list as soon as possible, as we plan to conclude the general debate tomorrow at 1 p.m.

In order to maximize the time available to us during the general exchange of views segment, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor. I would also like to remind all delegations already inscribed on the list to keep in mind that a rolling list implies that they should be prepared to make their statement at any time, possibly sooner than the originally scheduled time.

I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the length of statements, that is, 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of groups and 10 minutes for delegations making statements in their national capacity.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): It is an honour for me to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Madam, on your election for this substantive session, and the Vice-Chairs and Chairs of the Working Groups on the assumption of their duties. We would also like to express our appreciation to the Ambassador of Vanuatu, Mr. Odo Tevi, who chaired the Commission in 2016, the previous Vice-Chairs, as well as the previous Working Group Chairs from Morocco and Kazakhstan, for their efforts in last year's substantive session. And I thank Mr. Kim Won-soo, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his briefing, which provided us with information on what to expect in future. NAM assures the Chair of its full cooperation in what it hopes will be a productive session with positive outcomes. NAM underscores its long-standing position regarding the absolute validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and

expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle for negotiation in those areas. In that regard, the Movement reaffirms the relevance and centrality of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), with universal membership, as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, to consider specific disarmament issues and submit concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

The UNDC has contributed to the field of disarmament and arms control by adopting 16 guidelines, recommendations and declarations. NAM is concerned about the fact that the UNDC has been unable to agree to substantive recommendations on its agenda items since 2000 owing to a lack of political will and to the inflexible positions of the nuclear-weapon States. We stress the urgent need for achieving concrete results in the current UNDC cycle and, to that end, we urge all Member States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, to show the needed political will and flexibility. The Movement stands ready to cooperate actively and constructively with all parties in order to reach agreement on the substantive recommendations on the Commission's agenda items.

NAM reiterates its deep concern over the lack of progress in the implementation of nuclear-disarmament obligations and commitments by the nuclear-weapon States. It urges them to fully eliminate their nuclear arsenals, in accordance with the relevant multilateral legal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), contracted during the NPT Review Conferences, unequivocally undertaken in the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and further reiterated in the 2010 Review Conference. NAM asserts the continued validity of these obligations and commitments until they are fulfilled.

NAM stresses that progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential to strengthening international peace and security. In that context, the Movement stresses that nuclear disarmament, as the highest priority established by the tenth special session of the General Assembly and as a multilateral legal obligation, should not be made conditional on confidence-building measures, non-proliferation efforts or strategic stability.

The Movement underlines that General Assembly resolution 68/32 and its most recent version, resolution 71/71, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", provides a concrete road map for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament through the urgent commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons.

NAM reiterates that the United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament, to be convened no later than 2018, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions, would indeed provide the General Assembly with an opportunity to review progress made in nuclear disarmament and to make concrete recommendations in order to maintain the momentum created by the 2013 high-level meeting and to intensify international efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. NAM proposes the establishment of a preparatory committee for the United Nations high-level international conference in New York.

The Movement stresses the importance of enhancing public awareness of the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the need for their total elimination by observing 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

NAM affirms the importance of humanitarian considerations in the context of all deliberations on nuclear weapons and in promoting the goal of nuclear disarmament. The Movement expresses its deepest concern over the immediate, indiscriminate and massive death and destruction caused by any nuclear weapon detonation and their long-term catastrophic consequences for human health, the environment and other vital economic resources, endangering the lives of present and future generations. In that context, we reaffirm the need for all States to strictly comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law. NAM recalls the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996 (A/51/218, annex), and supports substantive discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

NAM also affirms the urgent need for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional, non-discriminatory and legally binding instrument to effectively assure all nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances — as a matter of high priority, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, which remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use.

The Movement underlines that all activities and plans related to improving existing nuclear weapons and developing new types of nuclear weapons contradict the objective of achieving nuclear disarmament as a multilateral legal obligation, as well as the commitments undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States in that regard.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the application by nuclear-weapon States of principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in all measures related to the fulfilment of their nuclear disarmament obligations and undertakings.

NAM reaffirms the inalienable right of each State to research, produce and use nuclear energy, including the sovereign right to develop a full national nuclear fuel cycle for peaceful purposes, without discrimination, and to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

NAM again stresses that proliferation concerns are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Non-proliferation control arrangements should be transparent and open to participation by all States, and should not impose restrictions on access to material, equipment and technology required by developing countries for peaceful purposes. The Movement stresses that issues related to proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means. Measures and initiatives taken in that regard should be within the framework of international law and should contribute to the promotion of international peace and security.

NAM States parties to the NPT regret that the ninth NPT Review Conference failed to reach consensus on a final outcome document, despite the efforts made by NAM delegations. That failure should serve as a stimulus to work harder towards achieving nuclear disarmament, the ultimate objective of the NPT. NAM States parties to the NPT stress the importance of fulfilling the commitments made at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences and of implementing the action plans adopted by the 2010 NPT Review Conference on nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

NAM States parties to the NPT further underline that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which is an integral and essential part of the package of decisions reached without a vote and which enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, should be implemented without any further delay. We stress that the resolution remains valid until its objectives are achieved.

NAM States parties to the NPT express their profound disappointment at the fact that the scheduled 2012 conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East did not convene, despite the consensus decision of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. That runs contrary to the letter and spirit of the 1995 resolution and violates the collective agreement reached at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. NAM States parties to the NPT stress that the commitments and obligations of the Treaty depositaries regarding the zone, as contained in the 1995 resolution and the 2010 action plan, remain valid until fulfilled. They strongly reject the impediments alleged by the conveners of the Conference as reasons for not holding it on schedule. In that context, NAM States parties to the NPT deplore the fact that Israel is the only party in the Middle East that has refused to participate in the Conference, as mandated in the 2010 Review Conference. NAM States parties to the NPT call for the full and immediate implementation of the 1995 resolution and the 2010 action plan on the Middle East so as to avoid negative repercussions for the effectiveness and credibility of the NPT, its review process and the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime as a whole.

In that regard, NAM recalls that, in the final document of the September 2016 NAM Summit on Margarita Island, the Heads of State and Government, while strongly supporting the establishment of a nuclear-weapon free zone in the Middle East, called on all parties concerned to take urgent and practical steps for the establishment of such a zone and, pending its establishment, demanded that Israel, the only country in the region that has not joined the NPT or declared its intention to do so, to renounce its possession of nuclear weapons, to accede to the NPT without preconditions or further delay, to promptly place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and to conduct its nuclear related activities in conformity with the non-proliferation regime.

The Heads of State and Government also expressed great concern about Israel's acquisition of nuclear capabilities, which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and condemned Israel for continuing to develop and

stockpile nuclear arsenals. They also called for the total and complete prohibition of the transfer of all nuclear-related equipment, information, material, facilities, resources and devices or the provision of assistance in the nuclear-related scientific or technological fields to Israel.

NAM underscores the need for strong and genuine political will in support of the multilateral disarmament machinery, in particular during negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body. NAM reiterates its call on the Conference on Disarmament to expeditiously agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work, without further delays, in order for it to overcome its long-standing deadlock and to start its substantive work.

In conclusion, the Movement pledges its full support for the UNDC's work, which must be intensified through reinvigorated political will in order to achieve meaningful outcomes to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation.

Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the Group of Arab States would like to express its appreciation to you, Madam, for assuming the task of chairing the United Nations Disarmament Commission this year. We congratulate you and express our appreciation to Venezuela and Bulgaria, which presided over the two Working Groups.

The Group of Arab States stresses the importance of the Disarmament Commission as an international venue for discussing disarmament issues, in view of the mandate issued by the General Assembly during its tenth special session. The Group underscores that the promotion of peace, security and stability in the world cannot be achieved as long as nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction continue to threaten the planet. It is incumbent upon us to irrevocably rid humankind of such weapons and to channel the enormous financial and material resources spent on them into development.

The Group is concerned over the failure to achieve any tangible progress in nuclear disarmament, the repeated failure in committing to the implementation of the second resolution, adopted at the 1995 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review and Extension Conference of the Parties, as well as the 13 steps adopted by the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons — to which we add the working plan of the 2010 Review Conference.

In that regard, nuclear-weapon States are attempting to avoid setting deadlines for the implementation of those international commitments to rid the world of nuclear weapons. In view of the lack of implementation of the consensual 2010 resolution, the Group of Arab States sought to break the stalemate by making a new proposal in an Arab working group at the most recent NPT review conference in 2015. The constructive proposal received the support of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, but it fell short of its objective.

We were disappointed by the fact that three countries, including two nuclear-weapon States that are signatories to those conventions, blocked international consensus and obstructed the adoption of a final document that would include the Middle East. Such actions raises serious questions about the intentions of those States. We therefore believe that ridding the Middle East region of nuclear weapons is a collective responsibility that should be borne by the international community. The Group of Arab States is committed to that objective, and we are still waiting for other States to follow suit. Otherwise, the credibility of the NPT will be undermined and with it the disarmament machinery and the NPT system.

That is why the Group of Arab States decided to undertake a comprehensive review of various positions over the four decades through a committee of elders to develop an Arab strategy for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Recently, a comprehensive integrated report was presented that included a clear and frank assessment and offered proposals for new policies that would help achieve Arab objectives in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The failure of the recent NPT review conference and the failure of nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitments in the field of nuclear disarmament makes it incumbent on us as an international community to redouble our efforts and to speedily work towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. That was actually achieved last week here, at the New York Headquarters, through the convening of a United Nations negotiating conference seeking an internationally legally binding instrument to eliminate nuclear weapons under General Assembly resolution 71/258, adopted last year.

The Group of Arab States will continue to contribute to international efforts towards nuclear disarmament, in line with article VI of the NPT. The Group works tirelessly by actively participating in all international nuclear-disarmament multilateral forums and will engage actively in the Preparatory Committee's work in May in Vienna, so that we can prepare for the new conference.

All Arab States joined the NPT and submitted all of their facilities to the comprehensive safeguard regimes of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Israel failed to follow suit, despite all international claims and decisions to the contrary. The Group of Arab States stresses that the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is the fourth pillar of the NPT and is no less important than the other three pillars. From 1995 to date, we have failed to make any progress in that regard, despite the fact that the decision was part and parcel of the core element — on the basis of which the 1995 NPT was extended indefinitely.

The practical confidence-building measures, voluntarily adopted, can contribute to the promotion of international peace and security at the regional and international levels. We should recall the guidelines for adequate confidence-building measures and the implementation of such measures at the regional and international levels, as recommended by the Commission and adopted by the General Assembly in 1996.

The Group of Arab States affirms that eliminating weapons of mass destruction is one of the pillars of the confidence-building measures. Therefore, it is very important to implement and operationalize the 1995 decision on declaring the Middle East region a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons. The commitments adopted voluntarily by States can contribute to building confidence among States. The Group would like to stress the importance of operationalizing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in order to enhance the ability of Member States to combat that grave phenomenon. We would also like to stress the importance of the international instrument for tracing small arms and light weapons.

We welcome the final document of the periodic meeting for the implementation of the programme of action, the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which convened in New York in June. We also look forward to continued international consensus on that important mechanism through the third Review Conference, to be held next year.

In conclusion, the Group of Arab States hopes that this year, the Commission will adopt integrated and comprehensive documents and recommendations to follow the positive measures issuing from the Commission in 1988 and 1999.

Mr. Zamora Rivas (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to speak on behalf of the States members of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

At the outset, CELAC congratulates you, Madam Chair, on your election to preside over the 2017 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. We also congratulate the members of the Bureau. We thank Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu for his tireless efforts as Chair of the Disarmament Commission last year.

CELAC reaffirms the importance of the Commission as the only specialized and deliberative body within the multilateral disarmament machinery of the United Nations. It permits substantive debate on specific related issues with a view to presenting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. CELAC reaffirms its readiness to work constructively to discharge the complex duties entrusted to the Commission.

CELAC recalls the historic decision of the Heads of States and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered in Havana for the second CELAC summit, formally declaring Latin America and the Caribbean to be a zone of peace and reaffirming our permanent commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts so as to definitively stamp out the use and threat of use of force in our region.

We reiterate our grave concern about the threat that nuclear weapons represent for the survival of humankind. We condemn its use or threat of use and deplore its potential humanitarian impact. We stress that nuclear weapons should never be used in any circumstance and that their use or threat of use is a crime against humanity and a violation of international law. Consequently, the only effective guarantee against

their use or threat of use are prohibition and total elimination in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, with a clearly defined timetable.

We reaffirm the urgent need to advance towards the primary objective of general and complete disarmament under strict international control if we are to succeed in the complete prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. In that connenction, CELAC welcomes the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/258. We reiterate our intention to participate actively in negotiating a universal and legally binding instrument that bans nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner in the context of a multilaterally agreed timetable that leads to their complete elimination.

CELAC member States urge all countries to work towards the expeditious adoption and negotiation of such a universal and legally binding instrument. It is in the legitimate interest of non-nuclear-weapon States, including the 33 States members of CELAC, to obtain unambiguous legally binding assurances from nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

We celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the conclusion of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the adoption of the Declaration of the States members of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. This meeting reaffirms the support and cooperation among member States to continue to work together towards global nuclear disarmament, in keeping with the mandate of Heads of State and Government of CELAC.

We deeply regret the lack of consensus in the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Furthermore, the provisions on nuclear disarmament contained in the draft outcome document did not meet the expectations of CELAC member States. We consider them to be regressive when compared to outcome documents from previous review conferences. We reaffirm the commitment of CELAC member States to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the full implementation of its three fundamental pillars — nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We once again voice our support for the inalienable right of States to develop the research, production and peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination, in keeping with articles 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Treaty.

CELAC stresses the importance of the universalization of the NPT. As such, it urges States that have not yet become signatories to do so as non-nuclear-weapon States. It calls on nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitments under article VI of the Treaty and to move towards the total elimination of such weapons. CELAC reiterates that the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is urgently needed and urges annex 2 States that have not signed or ratified it to do so as soon as possible.

CELAC is convinced that practical confidence-building measures for conventional weapons play a vital role in promoting understanding and transparency among States, and contribute to their stability and security We therefore invite States Members of the United Nations to strengthen, improve and broaden confidence-building measures at all levels, when applicable.

We also reaffirm the key role of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, in recognition of its significant contribution to efforts in that sphere. We underscore the need for its complete and effective implementation. We must continue working multilaterally in the framework of the Programme of Action, in a transparent and non-discriminatory fashion, and advancing towards the adoption of legally binding instruments on the marking, tracing and illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons so as to prevent their diversion to illegal markets.

CELAC hopes that the Arms Trade Treaty, the first legally binding instrument on arms trade, can help us effectively address the serious consequences of illegal trafficking and non-regulated trade of such weapons for many people and States, particularly through the transfer of weapons to non-State actors or non-authorized users often linked to transnational organized crime. Similarly, we hope that the Treaty can also help prevent conflict, armed violence and violations of international law.

With regard to anti-personnel mines, CELAC recognizes the valuable assistance of the United Nations Mine Action Service. We underline the importance of cooperation in demining efforts and providing

assistance to the victims, and hope that the success of recent years will continue.

CELAC supports international efforts to reduce the suffering caused by cluster munitions and to eliminate their use against civilian populations, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law. We also acknowledge Cuba's recent accession to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Palau's ratification of it in April 2016, as well as the establishment of a zone free of cluster munitions in Central America.

CELAC urges all members of the Conference on Disarmament to demonstrate political will to ensure the start without further delays of substantive work by adopting and implementing a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the nuclear-disarmament agenda, including the negotiation of a treaty on nuclear weapons; a universal, unconditional and legally binding agreement on negative security assurances, as well as on the prevention of weapons in outer space, and a non-discriminatory treaty to prohibit the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

In conclusion, the Community wishes to underscore the important work done by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the assistance it provides to countries of the region to implement disarmament measures in several areas. The Community regrets the fact that the Disarmament Commission has not succeeded in providing recommendations in 18 years. We call on Member States to show the flexibility and political will we need to move forward with our recommendations. CELAC reaffirms its willingness to cooperate with members of the Commission to achieve concrete results during this session.

Mr. Tommo Monthe (Cameroon): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

The African Group congratulates you, Madam Chair, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission at this session, and takes this opportunity to congratulate other members of the Bureau on their election. We would also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Odo Tevi of Vanuatu, for his hard work as Chair of the 2016 substantive session.

The Group appreciates the efforts of the Chairs of the two Working Groups and looks forward to working with them during this session. The Group also expresses its appreciation to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo, for his remarks this morning.

The African Group aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries by the representative of Indonesia, and restates its continued commitment to the principle and validity of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Group underlines that disarmament and proliferation issues are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

The African Group continues to underscore the importance and the relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. The Group believes that, despite some challenges, the Commission has positively contributed in the past to deliberations on nuclear disarmament, as the highest global priorities on disarmament, as well as on issues related to nuclear non-proliferation, arms control, conventional weapons and other confidence-building measures in the field of multilateral disarmament. The Group, however, expresses regret that the Disarmament Commission has not been able to succeed during its previous cycle due to the lack of political will and its inflexible position.

Nuclear weapons remain the only weapons of massive destruction yet to be prohibited. They remain a pressing and existential threat to humankind, and their use constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of norms of human civilization, as well as a crime against humanity. The Group considers any doctrine justifying their use or threat of use to be unacceptable and unjustifiable. It also recalls the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex), which affirms that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

The Group is very concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and reaffirms that any such use would be a violation of the Charter of the United Nations. It is in that spirit that we welcome the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/258, entitled "Taking forward

multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations", by which Member States would convene a diplomatic conference from 27 to 30 March and from 15 June to 7 July with the aim of negotiating a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination. The Group views the conference as a rare opportunity to right the wrongs of the past perpetrated through the use of nuclear weapons and urges all States to support this process.

The African Group wishes to state that the establishment of a treaty banning nuclear weapons will not undermine the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other multilateral disarmament efforts, but will rather help to complement and strengthen the NPT. The African Group would like to stress once again the need to universalize the NPT and to ensure compliance in the balanced and comprehensive manner with each of the three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In this regard, the Group reaffirms the inalienable rights of States to the development, research, production and peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination and in conformity with article IV of the NPT.

In March, the first preparatory committee meeting of the NPT will kick off as part of activities leading to the tenth review conference of States parties to the NPT in 2020. It is hoped that the conference will serve as an opportunity to strengthen the NPT by truly reinforcing its three pillars. Africa remains committed to promoting its overall objectives and calls on other State parties, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to fulfil their disarmament obligations and their irrevocable undertaking towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The Group regrets that the ninth NPT Review Conference of 2015 could not achieve consensus on the final outcome document.

The African Group views the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone as constituting an important measure towards achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. Therefore, the Group wishes to restate its position, as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, by the entry into force of the Treaty of Pelindaba on 15 July 2009. Our States will continue to honour and observe this status.

The African Group seizes this opportunity to encourage the remaining States yet to ratify, particularly the States contemplated in Protocol III, to take all necessary measures to ensure its speedy application. The Group continues to stress that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes an important milestone towards achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

The Group unequivocally supports the call for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It continues to express deep dissatisfaction at the failure to implement as agreed the commitments and obligations of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference regarding the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. It is very disappointed at the fact that the conference on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which should have been held in 2012, was not convened as mandated. In this regard, the commitment and obligation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which remains an integral and essential part of the package and the basis upon which consensus was reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, as well as related measures of the action plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, remain valid until the establishment of this zone.

The African Group wishes also to highlight the goal of General Assembly resolution 71/71, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", as an integral part of the overall objective of a nuclear-free world and calls for its effective implementation. The Group reiterates the need for a high-level international conference to be convened no later than 2018. The Group believes that this conference will serve as an opportunity for the General Assembly to make concrete recommendations with a view to maintaining the momentum of the high-level meeting held at the General Assembly in 2013, as well as intensify international efforts to ensure a nuclear-free world.

Having observed the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in September 2016, the African Group wishes to highlight the importance of achieving universal adherence to this instrument bearing in mind the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon States in this regard and to encourage the remaining annex 2 States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay in order to

ensure its entry into force. The African Group reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament, not only as the single multilateral negotiation body on disarmament issues, but one that should work to end the deadlock in nuclear-disarmament negotiations. The Group reiterates the urgent need for the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a comprehensive and balanced programme of work and to work towards the realization of the objective established in the negotiations.

Regarding the issue of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, the Group wishes to underline that in pursuit of the objective to contribute to international peace and security, confidence-building measures should be undertaken in full conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

The African Group acknowledges the efforts of States parties to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) since its entry into force, as well as the second conference of the State parties held in Geneva in 2016. The Group calls for the appropriate implementation of the ATT, as the legally binding instrument for the international transfer of conventional weapons, in a balanced and objective manner and one that protects the interests of all States and not just the major international producing and exporting States.

The African Group remains deeply concerned over the illicit trade, transfer, manufacture, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly on the continent of Africa. African States have suffered tremendously and disproportionately from the pernicious effects of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons and the destabilizing effects on the socioeconomic stability of the continent. In this context, the Group remains committed to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Group welcomes the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action in June 2016 and looks forward to the third review conference in 2018 as an important event. I urge all States to continue to fulfil their obligations regarding reporting technological transfers and by ensuring the unhindered flow of international cooperation and assistance, as stipulated by the Programme of Action.

Finally, the African Group continues to highlight efforts by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa in the context of contribution to disarmament issues and in providing the requisite assistance to States Members of the African Group in the implementation of disarmament, peace and security issues. The Group wishes to stress the need to further strengthen all United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament to allow them to fully discharge their mandate in this regard.

The Group once again regrets that the Disarmament Commission has not been able to make concrete and consensus-based recommendations in its previous cycles. The Group wishes to restate the critical importance of political will and adherence to transparency, including the principle of verifiability, that is, reversibility in disarmament in addressing international disarmament and security issues. The Group appeals for a sustained but meaningful dialogue as we begin deliberations on major issues. I look forward to concrete suggestions towards achieving peace and security for all.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, I would like to express our heartfelt condolences to the delegation of the Russian Federation over the deadly explosion in a Saint Petersburg subway station on Monday. We were shocked and deeply saddened by the terrifying news, and we wish strength and courage to the relatives of the deceased and a speedy recovery to the injured.

I congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your unanimous appointment as Chair of the 2017 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Both you and the members of the Bureau can count on Kazakhstan's support to achieve the desired objectives that the Commission was established to achieve in 1978.

I also wish to thank our Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu for his stewardship last year, which has brought us thus far and with whom we have worked since the start of the first cycle. We commend the leadership of High Representative Kim Won-soo and our appreciation goes to the whole team of the Office of Disarmament Affairs and the Secretariat, whose support and guidance were very important.

In 2015 and 2016, Kazakhstan had the honour to chair Working Group I, on achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and we most sincerely thank all delegations for their unfailing cooperation with us. We are most grateful to Minister

Wilmer Alfonzo Méndez Graterol of Venezuela for taking over the chairship of Working Group I this year, and we are confident he will ably take us to a good conclusion.

As the former Chair of Working Group I, we would like to make some observations about its work. The Disarmament Commission is entering the last phase of its current cycle during a time of deepening divisions within multilateral disarmament bodies, arising from the 2015 NPT Review Conference, our inability to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force, and the lack of any further negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Against this backdrop, it is no wonder that many delegations have looked outside the traditional United Nations forums for progress, as seen in the effort to craft a nuclear ban treaty. Yet, the Disarmament Commission, as the most representative body of all 193 members, has considerable potential to demonstrate that the existing disarmament machinery can produce results.

At a time when the disarmament machinery is so often criticized as stagnant and unproductive, I must underscore that the dedication and passion of representatives should not go underappreciated. It is when this dedication and passion are translated into productivity that the machinery can truly achieve results, and we found that in our informal informals, during the intersessional period, delegations demonstrated a real commitment to moving forward.

In that regard, I wish to applaud the efforts of all delegations for working with such passion and constructive engagement during the informal plenary meetings, as well as small group discussions. The best way is to aim for constructive but modest outcomes, which would be the most pragmatic way to proceed. We look forward to results at the end of this cycle that will unite us all.

Mr. Elbaz-Starinsky (Israel): As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on assuming the chairmanship and assure you of my delegation's support in the implementation of your duties.

I would like to join my Kazakh colleague in expressing my condolences to the Russian people and the Russian delegation. Terror is terror anywhere it hits, and it should be fought.

The importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) in the context of the disarmament machinery was outlined during the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978, when it was stipulated, among other things, that the Commission's functions should be to consider and make recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament and consider elements of a comprehensive programme for disarmament. It is clear that in order to fulfil its mandate, the Commission must look at issues in a comprehensive manner and in context. The Commission's recommendations should be deeply rooted in reality and strike the necessary balance between what is hoped for and what is feasible in the light of prevailing regional and global circumstances.

In that respect, Israel is concerned about arms-control and disarmament initiatives that seek to circumvent the complexities of the multilateral arena by catering to a limited group of like-minded countries that do not represent the full range of opinions and security interests. Such initiatives will not be able to achieve standing and authority or address issues effectively. Their relevance will remain contested, owing to their deficient memberships, and their achievements will be futile.

Israel supports a vision of a Middle East free from wars, conflicts and weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. This is a vision that all inhabitants of the region should aspire to, based on the hope for peace, mutual recognition, reconciliation and the cessation of all acts of terrorism, aggression and hostility. At the same time, Israel believes that the arms-control and disarmament processes are inseparable from their contexts. They must be built on confidence-building measures that are durable and sustainable and formulated in a way that addresses the relevant circumstances, challenges and threats that prevail in the region.

In recent years, the Middle East has been further destabilized and radicalized. The erosion of State sovereignty has never been so apparent. Territories that were previously under the control of central regimes are now contested or overrun by terrorist groups to which these territories have been ceded or abandoned. In fact, the Middle East, and Syria in particular, serves as a laboratory for terrorist activity.

Unfortunately, in today's Middle East, chemical weapons are still in use. The norm against the use

of such weapons has been repeatedly violated by a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). This creates incentives for terrorist groups to acquire these capabilities and use them. There can be no greater challenge to this norm than a State party disregarding its obligations. In order for the CWC to remain a bulwark against the use and re-emergence of chemical weapons, it must demand that Syria fulfil its international obligations in their entirety, in particular the prohibition against the use of chemical weapons, and submit a full and accurate disclosure of its chemical-weapon capabilities.

Iran remains the most significant threat to the security of the Middle East and beyond. Its recent ballistic-missile tests indicate that the threat posed by Iran has not diminished but rather increased. This is a sign of its attitude to the implementation of its international obligations. Iran's clandestine activities in the nuclear domain in the past, as well as its continued acts of concealment and duplicity, in conjunction with its policy of aggression and hostility, raise a fundamental question as to whether regional players fully comprehend their duty to comply with international legal obligations.

Against this troubling backdrop, any regional arms-control process cannot be detached from reality. Israel has repeatedly emphasized that a more secure and peaceful Middle East requires all regional States to engage in a process of direct and sustained dialogue to address the broad range of regional security challenges in the region, which include all challenges and threats faced by the countries in the region individually and collectively. Such a dialogue, based on the widely accepted principle of consensus, can emanate only from within the region and address in an inclusive manner the threat perception of all regional parties in order to enhance and improve their security. Direct engagement, combined with trust and confidence-building, have always been an essential basis for the creation of a new and inclusive security paradigm in a region fraught with wars, conflicts, disintegrating national territories and human suffering.

The 1999 report of this very forum, at its fifty-fourth session, sets out the many important elements that contribute to the necessary foundation for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. The report clarifies that such a complex and sensitive security architecture should be the product of the specific circumstances of the region concerned, emanate exclusively from the States within the region at hand, and be pursued by all States of the region. Furthermore, such a zone needs to be based on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.

Israel views with grave concern the dire effects associated with the proliferation and diversion of conventional weapons and considers this threat detrimental. Israel, individually and in collaboration with other stakeholders, actively works to counter this threat through the implementation of Security Council resolutions, international norms and standards and national tools and mechanisms.

One of the most important instruments in addressing this challenge is the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, including the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The challenge of diversion and illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons requires our full and concerted attention and can be addressed only through our collaborative efforts, and the Programme of Action is the basis and appropriate framework for that.

Israel welcomes the successful meetings and deliberations held in New York in June 2015 on the International Tracing Instrument and the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, held in June 2016. Israel is also looking forward to the third review conference, to be held in New York in 2018. Israel views the preparatory process as vital and important and looks forward to the exchange of views in that framework. However, the Programme of Action is not, and cannot be, an alternative to national mechanisms and legislation. It does not replace bilateral and regional cooperation, which should be enhanced.

Israel views the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as another milestone in those efforts. It requires Member States to carry out arms exports in a responsible and organized manner, thereby, hopefully, reducing the illicit transfer of arms and their diversion. As a signatory State, Israel supports the goals and purposes of the Treaty and acknowledges the important developments that have occurred in the international sphere through the establishment of the ATT. Israel looks forward to the third Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which will be held in Geneva in September.

The fifth Review Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, which was held in Geneva in December 2016, yielded several significant results. Israel looks forward to further in-depth discussions on the issues of improvised explosive devices and lethal autonomous weapons systems.

As this is the final year in the three-year cycle, we hope that we can progress with regard to the outcome documents in a way that will reflect both the deteriorating situation around the world and the specific approaches and needs of every State.

Mr. Hahn Choonghee (Republic of Korea): At the outset, I would like to associate myself with the previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam Chair, on your election as Chair of this year's session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I would also like to express my appreciation for the statement made by Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. I assure you, Madam Chair, of my delegation's full support for the work of the Commission and look forward to a productive session under your able leadership.

What we are witnessing today is a world in which old threats are becoming more entrenched and new challenges are emerging in a more complicated manner. Instead of practical arrangements designed for the reduction of nuclear arsenals, expansive military programmes are being endorsed. The threats posed by chemical weapons have not been mitigated; they still linger dangerously. The peril resulting from improvised explosive devices and other conventional weapons in conflict continue unabated. The risks arising from proliferation, including by non-State actors, are being exacerbated amid rapidly evolving technology and transboundary networks, both online and offline.

Among those, the nuclear and missile threat posed by North Korea is the most pressing issue that we collectively face. Last year alone, North Korea staged two nuclear tests and launched 24 ballistic missiles, in clear violation of multiple Security Council resolutions. Pyongyang continued its provocation this year by firing six ballistic missiles and carrying out a ground test of a new type of ballistic-missile engine — within just the past three months. Each provocation is not a mere repetition but, rather, an advance in its nuclear-weapons programme. In his New Year's address in January, the leader of North Korea declared that preparations for launching an intercontinental ballistic missile had reached their final stage. There is now a high probability that North Korea might conduct another strategic provocation this very month.

If the situation is not addressed with the sense of urgency and gravity that it warrants, the very foundation of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) at its core, will be irreparably undermined. In that regard, the Republic of Korea strongly urges North Korea to stop any further provocations and abandon all of its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, in accordance with its obligations, including in the relevant Security Council resolutions.

As the unique deliberative body of the disarmament machinery within the United Nations framework, the United Nations Disarmament Commission has an important role in nurturing various ideas on global disarmament and non-proliferation issues. Faced with the challenges I referred to and an overall stagnation within the United Nations disarmament machinery, and charged with wrapping up the work of the 2015-2017 substantive sessions, the UNDC's distinct role in deliberations is particularly important this year.

In our first Working Group discussion on nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, both the nuclear haves and the have-nots, as well as both proponents and opponents of the immediate establishment of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, should focus on reaching tangible recommendations that can build on the positive momentum towards the success of the next month's upcoming session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference. The Republic of Korea believes in a step-by-step nuclear disarmament approach that takes the security environment of every country into consideration, and is willing to work with other countries in a practical and inclusive manner so as to collectively reach a fruitful outcome during this year's session.

At the same time, we should not hinder the progress made during the past two years in Working Group II, on confidence-building measures regarding conventional

weapons. The Republic of Korea welcomes ideas for including additional items, including on transparency- and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, as a means to revitalize the current discussions in the Commission.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my hope that the Commission will emerge from its prolonged deadlock to once again serve as a valuable platform for adopting concrete guidelines and recommendations in the area of disarmament. We look forward to constructive discussions over the next three weeks.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): First of all, I wish to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election, as well as the other members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the two Working Groups on theirs. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the tireless efforts made by Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) during its 2016 substantive session, as well and the important work carried out by the two Chairs of the Working Groups, the representatives of Kazakhstan and Morocco. I also thank Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his statement, which shed light on the current issues concerning global disarmament.

We join the other delegations in expressing our profound sympathy to the delegation of the Russian Federation and to the people of that country for the tragic events that took place this morning in Saint Petersburg.

Sri Lanka attaches great importance to the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We resolutely subscribe to the significance of the Commission, with its universal membership, as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament apparatus that considers specific disarmament issues and submits concrete recommendations to the General Assembly.

It is noteworthy that this year's substantive session of the Disarmament Commission is being held just after the United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. We see the Conference as an important step in the process of taking forward multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations — the first multilateral negotiations on nuclear weapons since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The momentum generated by the Conference should be used to eliminate the sense of defeatism that permeates international deliberations on disarmament and to revive the diminishing interest of States with regard to general and complete disarmament.

In the same vein, it would be prudent to use that momentum to inject motivation into the Disarmament Commission, which unfortunately has not been able to achieve any concrete results during the past 16 years. It is imperative that we endeavour to produce tangible recommendations during its current substantive session. As we have advocated time and again, achieving concrete results in this sole specialized deliberative body would require political will and flexibility on the part of all Member States.

The risk posed by the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons will remain as long as nuclear weapons exist. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or the threat of the use of nuclear weapons. The transboundary and global impact of nuclear weapons jeopardizes the safety and security of populations. Nuclear weapons are inhumane and indiscriminate by nature. While the elimination of stockpiles by the nuclear-weapon States remains slow, continuing nuclear-weapon tests compromise peace and stability in the world. The danger of nuclear material falling into terrorist hands is another serious dimension to which we must pay attention in the current context when discussing nuclear weapons.

Strengthening the disarmament treaty regime is indispensable to ensuring a rules-based regime for nuclear disarmament. In that context, we reiterate our support for the key recommendations of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission in 2006, including the paramount value of multilateralism and the overall importance of international law in reaching the goal of disarmament. In that regard, we also wish to reiterate the centrality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the international legal regime on nuclear weapons, including the 2010 NPT Action Plan and the 13 practical steps to disarmament, agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

Sri Lanka believes that space exploration and the use of outer space make invaluable contributions to the advancement of humankind. While space exploration offers abundant opportunities, it is incumbent upon those who explore and use it to prevent outer space from becoming an arena for an arms race. With increased space activities, there are justifiable concerns that the

space environment is gradually becoming congested. The potential militarization and weaponization of the space environment could be a prelude to the grave danger of outer space becoming a contested area and a source of conflict.

We have long held the view that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and keeping it free of conflict are essential to averting a grave danger for international peace and security. It is our firm conviction that the early conclusion of an international agreement on the prevention of the arms race in outer space would definitely strengthen the existing legal framework. In that context, I am pleased to inform the Commission that, at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, Egypt and Sri Lanka together proposed in the First Committee a draft resolution (A/C.1/71/L.3) on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, which calls for negotiations on a multilateral instrument concerning the prevention of an arms race in outer space at the Conference on Disarmament.

The category of conventional weapons is perhaps less dramatic in nature and more limited in scope as compared to weapons of mass destruction. However, owing to their wide use in internal and international armed conflicts, those weapons continue to inflict death and tremendous damage globally on a daily basis. The situation is further aggravated owing to the illicit trade and unregulated spread of conventional weapons, which has allowed non-State armed groups to use them in a manner contrary to the principles of international humanitarian law, and the victims are largely innocent civilian populations. As a country that suffered from a three-decades-long internal armed conflict, Sri Lanka is also well aware of the ramifications of the use of conventional weapons by such groups.

In that context, it is imperative that we pay attention to the implementation of, and compliance with, conventions, treaties and regulations pertaining to conventional weapons, as well as strengthen international law in that area, so as to alleviate undue suffering. That will contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16 and promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

Sri Lanka values the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) as a principal instrument of international humanitarian law that strikes the right balance between the legitimate security concerns of States and complying with the principles of international humanitarian law. In that context, we welcome the ongoing discussions on lethal autonomous weapon systems under the CCW framework. Sri Lanka particularly welcomes the outcome of the 2016 Meeting of Experts, which agreed on a set of recommendations, as per the mandate agreed to at the 2015 Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, which Sri Lanka had the privilege to chair.

As outgoing Chair of the 2015 Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the CCW at the seventy-first session of the General Assembly, Sri Lanka introduced the annual First Committee draft resolution (A/C.1/71/L.4) on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons, which was adopted by consensus.

Disarmament education and research take on great importance as we work towards our shared goal of general and complete disarmament. In that regard, we extend our appreciation to the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). It is essential that Member States support UNIDIR's work, thereby enabling the Institute to carry out its unique mandate effectively.

We live in a time when disarmament has assumed an unprecedented degree of importance in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which seeks to build peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, while focusing on significantly reducing all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. The work of the Commission is extremely important to achieving those targets. We must achieve them, and the time has come to overcome the sense of defeatism in international deliberations aimed at general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Tenya Hasegawa (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I take the floor, let me to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on chairing the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

At the outset, I should like to turn to the weapons that cause the most harm to humankind: small arms and light weapons, the proliferation of which poses a serious challenge for our societies. In the case of developing countries, the destabilizing effects of those weapons when they wind up in criminal hands are well known and have contributed to worsening levels of violence through their daily use, not only for the commission of common crime but also transnational organized crime.

In its determination to combat that situation, my country participated in the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. On that occasion, my delegation reiterated its full commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, by noting its special relevance to international cooperation and assistance, especially in connection with border areas; strengthening national capacities; the exchange of information and experiences; and the marking and tracing of weapons, among others.

We are aware that trafficking and the diversion of arms significantly increase other illicit activities that undermine the implementation of international law, governability and peaceful and safe coexistence of our citizens, and that is why we are fully committed to implementing those instruments.

In that context, my country proposed strengthening its response capacity through the enactment of the amnesty and regularization act, which came into force in August 2016. Pursuant to that law, citizens are encouraged to hand over illegal weapons to the designated monitoring body. In the same vein, a project on the theme "Strengthening capacities for effective and transparent management of small arms and ammunition in the private security sector" was launched under the auspices of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. With this project, we are promoting good governance in the private armed security sector in Latin America and the Caribbean through the implementation of international instruments and standards, as well as technical assistance in the areas of arms control and private security regulation.

At the international level, we are party to international arms-control regimes. At the subregional Andean level, we have been implementing the Andean Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and we are working on the development of a legal framework for the tracing of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. At the hemispheric level, Peru is party to the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions and the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials. In that regard, within the Convention's Consultative Committee and the fifth meeting of ministers responsible for public security in the Americas, Peru has proposed the establishment of an inter-American network of firearms, ammunition and explosives control entities, which is a mechanism that Peru has been setting up to support the strengthening of regional cooperation and the exchange of information, legislation and good practices.

My country attaches particular importance to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which is consistent with our objectives and commitments. In that regard, last year we deposited our Treaty ratification instrument. With that step, Peru became a State party to this important instrument. In order to implement the ATT, under the Technical Cooperation Programme of the European Union and the Federal Office for Economic Affairs and Export Control, we approved a road map in December 2015. Its first phase includes activities to support the relevant sectors through training workshops on the scope and purpose of the Treaty, as well as the preparation of a national monitoring list and support for national arms registries, the development of practical tools to strengthen licence-granting procedures in the transfer of arms and ammunition; and inter-institutional cooperation and the identification and management of stockpiles. In addition, we intend to carry out other activities in the second phase, such as training on registering civil and military weapons; the identification of weapons and the management of weapons stockpiles; and the strengthening of the national registry.

Nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons are also a matter of great interest to my country. In that regard, Peru reaffirms its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the full and equal

implementation of its three pillars. We also reaffirm the inalienable right of all States to develop research, production and peaceful use of nuclear energy without discrimination and in accordance with articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT.

Peru advocates the universalization of regimes designed to prohibit weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, I would like to put on record my appreciation for the excellent work done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in recent years.

Peru is a party to all multilateral instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, which is one of the pillars of our foreign policy and is proof of the real will of my country to achieve international peace and security through complete disarmament. This resolute position led Peru to participate in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations to address substantively the issue of effective and specific legal measures, provisions and rules that could contribute to progress on multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament to establish and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons, pursuant to resolution 70/33. In that context, we reaffirm the urgent to need to make progress toward the primary objective of general and complete disarmament under strict international control and to achieve the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons. We have been actively participating in the negotiation of a universal legally binding instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner within a multilaterally agreed time frame, leading to their total elimination.

With regard to the disarmament machinery, my delegation believes that the relaunching of the Conference on Disarmament is a matter of great priority that must be addressed, as it is the primary negotiating body when it comes to international disarmament and security issues. We are very concerned about the fact that, in recent years, the member States of the Conference on Disarmament have not been able to arrive at an agreement on a programme of work that deals substantively with the issues. My country urges all States members of the Conference on Disarmament to show greater political resolve to ensure the commencement of substantive work leading to the adoption and implementation of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work.

In that regard, my country wishes to express its gratitude to Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu, Chair of the Commission in 2016, for reaching an agreement on the Commission's agenda for the three-year cycle. However, we regret the lack of progress in the Disarmament Commission, and we are concerned that the respective Working Groups have not produced substantive recommendations. My delegation is convinced that this year under your leadership, Madam Chair, the Disarmament Commission will demonstrate greater political will, flexibility and cooperation among all States.

Finally, I wish to conclude by reaffirming Peru's unwavering commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. We will do our utmost in the work of the Commission, as we are convinced that the achievements we can make in this body will contribute to strengthening international peace and security.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is a matter of pride and great responsibility for Argentina to chair the Disarmament Commission this year. Knowing you very well, Madam Chair, I am certain that you will spare no effort in guiding the work of this body towards a satisfactory outcome in this third session of the present cycle.

Let me congratulate the other members of the Bureau and the two Chairs of the Working Groups and thank the Permanent Representative of Vanuatu, Ambassador Odo Tevi, for his work during the previous session. I would also like to thank and welcome the presence of High Representative for Disarmament Kim Won-soo. We are grateful to him and his entire team for their work and dedication.

I would like to express my sympathy to the people and the Government of the Russian Federation in connection with the attack carried out in Saint Petersburg this morning. It is, regrettably, all too often that we must repeat such sentiments at the United Nations.

The Argentine delegation fully associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. My delegation would like to add some brief comments on the matters before us.

The overall disarmament and non-proliferation scenario is rife with challenges that require the international community to work constructively and

endeavour to arrive at as broad a consensus as possible in order to achieve the ultimate objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. The Argentine delegation therefore believes that the best way to achieve concrete progress is through an inclusive and constructive dialogue that takes into account the interests and concerns of all Member States.

The deliberative nature and universal composition of the Disarmament Commission make it the forum where, on the basis of dialogue, we can arrive at agreements and break the deadlock that has mired us for more than a decade, hence the relevance of the two items originally under consideration by the Commission. By means of a frank dialogue in this deliberative body, we should be able to identify measures that allow us to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons and create trust in the measures of transparency, cooperation and peace — aspirations we all share.

In that regard, the delegation of Argentina would like to welcome the consideration of a third item this year, namely, "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities". We believe that such measures will improve our discussions and lay the foundation for them to be fully addressed in the next cycle. For Argentina, the Disarmament Commission is the forum in which interest on disarmament issues can be maintained and revitalized as much as possible. We therefore call on all delegations to pool their efforts and adopt a pragmatic and constructive approach that is devoid of sterile polarization, in order to pave the way for a successful session. To that end, Madam Chair, you can count on the full support of the delegation of Argentina.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): We congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. That this is the final year in the Commission's three-year cycle is a matter of great significance, and I therefore assure you and the Bureau of our full support and cooperation.

Pakistan aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The proceedings of the Commission are taking place against a turbulent global security backdrop. The international security picture is far from encouraging. Old conflicts continue to fester as newer ones flare up. There are also signs of growing global tensions and confrontation. Not surprisingly, this fraught global political landscape has had a negative impact on the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Differences on perspectives, approaches and modalities continue to persist. The hostile use of cyber- and other emerging technologies, the development and use of lethal autonomous weapons systems and armed drones, as well as the development of advanced conventional hypersonic systems of global reach, are all worrying developments.

Most aspects of the disarmament and non-proliferation landscape do not present an optimistic picture; instead, the trends are mostly negative. The principal reason for that is the lack of progress made by the nuclear-weapon States in fulfilling their legal nuclear-disarmament obligations. That has had a negative impact on the efficacy of the non-proliferation regime. Some nuclear-weapon States are not willing to give up their large inventories of nuclear weapons or their modernization programmes, even as they pursue non-proliferation with messianic zeal. Some 13 non-nuclear-weapon States members of nuclear armed alliances continue to rely on nuclear weapons, while advocating abstinence for other States that face real and genuine security deficits, some of which are exacerbated by extravagant arms exports and nuclear cooperation.

Progress may further be impeded by certain recent developments, including some nuclear-weapon States vying to greatly strengthen and expand nuclear capabilities by outmatching potential competitors, thereby potentially starting a new nuclear arms race. That is in flagrant violation of the basic principles enshrined in first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I), according to which the nuclear-weapon States, together with other militarily significant States, have the primary responsibility for nuclear disarmament and for halting and reversing the arms race.

Another key challenge to long-held non-proliferation norms and rules is the granting of discriminatory waivers to some and making exceptions for either par or profit motives. Such waivers carry obvious proliferation risks. Those special arrangements are not only discriminatory and denote nuclear double standards, but also open up the possibility of the diversion of material intended for peaceful uses to military purposes. They contravene non-proliferation rules and also undermine regional strategic stability. Many States continue to pursue those policies of granting waivers and exemptions,

thereby contributing to insecurity and imbalances in certain regions, especially in my region of South Asia, where military expenditures are increasing and conventional-weapon inventories are expanding.

The disruption of strategic stability in South Asia through the introduction of nuclear weapons in our neighbourhood fundamentally challenged my country's security. My country was left with no option but to follow suit in order to restore strategic stability in the region and deter any form of aggression. Pakistan has made a number of proposals to keep South Asia free of nuclear weapons and missile systems. They include the simultaneous application of International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards on all nuclear facilities and bilateral arrangements for reciprocal inspections, simultaneous accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a regional comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, a zero-missile regime in South Asia and the signing of a non-aggression pact. Unfortunately, none of those proposals has ever elicited a positive response.

In his address to the General Assembly last year (see A/71/PV.11), our Prime Minister, Mr. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, underlined Pakistan's resolve to maintain strategic stability in the region. Guided by a commitment to the principles of non-proliferation and with the aim of maintaining peace and stability in the region, our Prime Minister expressed readiness to agree on a bilateral arrangement between Pakistan and India on a nuclear-test ban. That also awaits a response. Peace and stability in South Asia cannot be achieved without resolving underlying disputes, agreeing on measures for nuclear and missile restraint and instituting conventional force balance. Our proposal for a strategic restraint regime based on those three interlocking elements remains on the table. Our conduct continues to be defined by restraint and responsibility and the avoidance of any arms race.

The existing and emerging challenges to global and regional security — and, consequently, to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament — need to be addressed holistically and comprehensively on the basis of constructive and cooperative multilateralism. For over a decade, Pakistan has been advocating the renewal and rebuilding of an international consensus on disarmament issues on the basis of the principle of equal and undiminished security for all. The international consensus that was reached about four decades ago through SSOD-I, in 1978, has been eroding ever since. The Commission, as a deliberative body with universal membership, can play an important role in evolving such a consensus.

Rebuilding the consensus is not going to be easy, given the interplay of competing perceptions, interests and approaches. However, it is becoming imperative for the Commission to give fresh impetus to it. To bolster consensus, progress is required on all four core issues of the disarmament agenda. There should be a renewed commitment to achieving nuclear disarmament within a reasonable time frame. Without such a commitment, the bargain of the non-proliferation regime will continue to erode.

For shifting the focus away from their failure to comply with their legal disarmament obligations, some nuclear-weapon States and their allies have found it convenient to preach and advocate the commencement of negotiations for a highly discriminatory and imbalanced treaty — the so-called fissile material cut-off treaty. As envisaged at present, a cut-off-only treaty would freeze the status quo to our permanent disadvantage and negatively affect strategic stability in South Asia. For Pakistan, a treaty on fissile material concerns our vital national and security interests. Among the States that posses nuclear weapons, most have either announced a unilateral moratorium on the production of fissile material or retained a level of comfort through continued national production and the conclusion of special arrangements. It is only after amassing tons of fissile material, far in excess of any foreseeable defence need, that they were converted to the cause of a cut-off treaty.

My country voted against the relevant General Assembly resolution, and we did not participate in the Group of Governmental Experts on a fissile material cut-off treaty that worked during 2014-2015. We will not participate in the 25 member high-level expert preparatory group that is being established pursuant to that resolution. The fate of that group will be no different from the so-called consensus report of the previous Group of Governmental Experts, which utterly failed to reconcile the differing views, not just in scope but also in terms of principles, objectives, definitions, verification and elements pertaining to entry into force. What could not be glossed over is the divergence of positions on almost all elements of the treaty among the 25 selected experts.

When it comes to giving legally binding assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, the position of some nuclear-weapon States and their allies is simply incomprehensible. That issue has become the most ripe issue on the Conference on Disarmament agenda and a legitimate demand of the overwhelming majority of non-nuclear-weapon States, pending progress on nuclear disarmament. Such assurances will not undermine the security of any nuclear-weapon State. The reason for their opposition to such a cost-free measure is the perceived fear of their loss of hegemonic superiority. Those nuclear-weapon States need to take guidance from the cardinal principle of SSOD-I, that is, equal and undiminished security for all at the lowest level of armament and military forces.

Pakistan has been an active participant in, and contributor to, initiatives such as the Nuclear Security Summit process and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and its implementation and assessment group. Pakistan recently ratified the 2005 amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and declared its adherence to the Guidelines for Transfers of Nuclear-related Dual-use Equipment, Materials, Software and Related Technology, also known as the Nuclear Suppliers' Group Guidelines. Our export controls are fully harmonized with those of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Australia Group. In order to give effect to those measures, a well-functioning strategic export-control division and an inter-agency oversight board overseeing the work of that division have been in place for a decade. Pakistan accords the highest priority to ensuring a fool-proof safety and security mechanism in chemical, biological and nuclear areas. Over the years, we have put in place extensive physical-protection measures, robust command-and-control structures and effective regulatory regimes.

As a manifestation of its continued commitment to the goal of non-proliferation, last month Pakistan hosted a two-day regional seminar on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The seminar was attended by 28 participants from 16 regional countries and international organizations. It served as a platform to provide useful guidance for participating States from the region in their implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

In conclusion, let me recall that Pakistan has the requisite credentials and expertise to be part of international export-control bodies. As a first step, therefore, we have sought membership in the Nuclear Suppliers' Group. As the Group deliberates on the legal, technical and political aspects of membership by countries that are not party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it must establish and adhere to transparent, objective and non-discriminatory criteria that ensure the equal treatment of non-NPT applicants to the Group's membership.

Mr. Tsymbaliuk (Ukraine): At the outset, I would like to join previous speakers in expressing our condolences to the families of the victims of today's explosions in Saint Petersburg.

On behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, Madam Chair, allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your respective elections. We look forward to a continued discussion on recommendations for achieving the goals of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and on practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons. We believe that the United Nations Disarmament Commission continues to play an important role in the overall United Nations disarmament machinery through its deliberations on specific issues relating to nuclear weapons and conventional arms.

Ukraine has consistently supported a multilateral approach to disarmament and the international security agenda. While recognizing the difficulties associated with implementing existing international treaties and bringing new ones into force, we reaffirm our commitment to maintaining and strengthening the current disarmament machinery and international cooperation so as to reinforce the existing international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is essential that both non-nuclear and nuclear-weapon States be involved in that process.

We share the view that the use of nuclear weapons is the most serious threat that humankind faces today. Ukraine demonstrated a proactive approach in that area by abandoning its nuclear capability and acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in November 1994, as well as by taking concrete steps to eliminate the use of highly enriched uranium for civilian purposes through the removal of all of its existing stocks from its national territory, in March 2012.

Even after having been affected by the Russian military aggression in, and occupation of, its territories, Ukraine continues to regard the NPT as a key element of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. We provide comprehensive support for its effective implementation, further strengthening and universalization.

Ukraine consistently stands for reducing nuclear arsenals, ending the modernization of nuclear weapons and decreasing holistically nuclear weapons' role in States' military and strategic doctrines. We must re-emphasize that the historic decision of Ukraine to renounce its nuclear weapons was primarily based on the clear international security guarantees provided by the Budapest Memorandum on security assurances, signed by Ukraine, the United States, the United Kingdom and the Russian Federation. We stand by the position that the Memorandum is valid and should be upheld by all of its signatory States.

Ukraine supports the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) with a view to its entry into force constituting a tangible stride towards attaining the noble goal of a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. We call upon all States that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT, in particular the remaining States listed in annex 2, to do so without delay.

We also continue to support commencing negotiations on and concluding a fissile-material cut-off treaty, which is essential both to constraining nuclear proliferation and advancing the goal of nuclear disarmament. Ukraine urgently calls for finding common ground on the issue of existing fissile-material stocks and on the immediate commencement of negotiations on such a treaty within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. In that respect, we fully support the establishment of the high-level expert preparatory group and look forward to the outcome of its work.

As an advocate of maintaining peace and security at the lowest possible level of armaments, including conventional ones, Ukraine recognizes the important role of conventional arms control, including at the regional and subregional levels, and, accordingly, welcomes all respective measures in that area. Ukraine's consistent commitment to strengthening the effectiveness of confidence-building measures also remains unchanged. Ukraine fully shares the concerns that the illicit trade, spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons pose a serious threat to security and stability in the world. We therefore consider the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as an important tool in global efforts to combat that threat. We support the proper implementation of Programme of Action, as well as that of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons by all States.

Ukraine attaches particular importance to ensuring effective export-control procedures in the sphere of conventional arms that meet all standing international requirements. Ukraine strictly adheres to the respective resolutions and decisions of the Security Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the international control regime established under the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.

Ukraine also welcomes the entry into force and the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) as a comprehensive legally binding instrument for establishing common standards in that area, thereby preventing the proliferation of conventional arms. We continue to co-sponsor the ATT draft resolution in the framework of the First Committee.

The issue of the illicit transfer, accumulation and misuse of conventional arms should remain among the priorities of the international community, especially in the context of regional security. Russian military aggression against Ukraine, with the use of regular military forces armed with modern types of conventional armaments and ammunition, has significantly damaged the existing system of conventional arms control. The Russian Federation continues its massive transfers of military goods to our territory, in both Crimea and eastern Ukraine. That deliberately destabilizes the security of not only the subregion, but of Europe as a whole. We have no right to underestimate such facts, and we should tackle the issue of the destabilizing accumulation and misuse of conventional arms with the highest level of the responsibility.

Mrs. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba fully supports the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as the statement delivered by the delegation of El Salvador

on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

We congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chair of the Disarmament Commission during this year's substantive session. We extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau and to the Chairs of the Working Groups. We wish them all success in the exercise of their responsibilities, and we assure them of our cooperation. We hope that in this final year of the present cycle of discussions, the Commission will make substantive progress and that its deliberations will lead to agreement on concrete recommendations on the agenda items, with a view to their submission to the General Assembly.

Taking advantage of the situation created by the first session of the United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons leading towards their total elimination, held last week, we reiterate the call on the nuclear-weapon States and others protected by the so-called nuclear umbrella to show political will and commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons, and to take the first step in that direction during the work of this session of the Disarmament Commission.

It is alarming that some States continue to modernize their arsenals and to develop, including through subcritical trials, new types of nuclear weapons, thereby trying to legitimize their possession through a policy of nuclear deterrence and a dubious concept of security. It is also worrying that they continue to deploy nuclear weapons in the territories of States that do not possess them. Moreover, all of that is occurring in clear breach of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in particular article VI thereof, and the agreements reached at the 1995, 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences.

We regret that three countries blocked consensus to agree on the draft final document of the ninth NPT Review Conference, against the will and the determination to move forward shown by the overwhelming majority of States parties to the Treaty. The failure of that Conference reaffirmed the urgent need to initiate multilateral negotiations, within the framework of the United Nations, for the prompt finalization of a convention providing for the prohibition of all nuclear weapons, with a view to their total elimination.

We express our displeasure at the failure to comply with the agreement to hold an international conference for the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The establishment of such a zone would in particular be a significant contribution to achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament and a momentous step forward in the peace process in that region. We urge once again that the conference be held without further delay.

In view of the ongoing serious threat posed by the mere existence of nuclear weapons to the very survival of the human species, we reiterate the call to take advantage of all possible forums, including the sessions of the Commission, as well as the work of its Working Group on recommendations to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, to move towards the prohibition and total elimination of such weapons.

We recall the convening by the General Assembly, with the support of the vast majority of Member States, of a high-level international conference, no later than 2018, to review progress on nuclear disarmament. That meeting could help to identify ways and means of eliminating nuclear weapons in the shortest time possible, with the aim of agreeing on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons over a specific period of time.

We would also like to recall that the commemoration of 26 September at the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons offers an important opportunity to raise awareness in the international community of the danger posed by those weapons.

It is time that nuclear disarmament ceased to be a postponed and neglected target. Our country has reiterated that the only guarantee to prevent the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons by States or individuals would be their absolute prohibition and elimination, under strict international control. In that regard, we consider the adoption of a prohibition treaty to be an intermediate step only and that negotiations in that vein should lead to the adoption of a comprehensive convention establishing the elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified period of time and under strict international verification. That would be the only way to ensure full, effective, irreversible, transparent and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

In turn, we reaffirm the inalienable right of States to research, produce and peacefully use nuclear

energy without discrimination and in accordance with articles I, II, III and IV of the NPT. We also recall the commitment of all parties to the Treaty to facilitate participation in the exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

With regard to the item on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, we consider that such voluntary measures are a way to strengthen international peace and security and must be adopted in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, while respecting the specific security concerns of States. We recognize the contribution of confidence-building measures to disarmament and arms control, but we reiterate that they are not an alternative to disarmament.

We also reiterate the contribution to confidence-building of the Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, adopted at the second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana in January 2014. We demand that the Proclamation, which reflects the principles of interacting with one another with respect and fellowship, be respected. Under the Proclamation, and bearing in mind that the imposition of military bases without the consent of the peoples concerned undermines confidence-building in the area of conventional weapons, we demand the return of territory illegally occupied by the naval base in Guantanamo, against the will of the people of Cuba.

Finally, our delegation reiterates its readiness to work actively with a view to concluding this cycle of the Disarmament Commission with specific recommendations on both agenda items.

Mr. Mohamed (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I am pleased to express my congratulations to you, Madam Chair, on your election to lead the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We also congratulate the Chairs of the two Working Groups, Bulgaria and Venezuela, on their elections.

We align ourselves with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, Cameroon and Qatar on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States, respectively.

We wish to express our deepest condolences to the Government and the people of the Russian Federation following the attacks that took place recently in Saint Petersburg.

The Sudan will participate positively and actively in the deliberations of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. My delegation wishes to stress the importance of the role of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations disarmament machinery, as the negotiations therein can give rise to decisions and recommendations applicable to all, thereby allowing the United Nations disarmament machinery to make progress and strengthen peace and security throughout the world. Peace and security in the world will be impossible as long as weapons of mass destruction continue to threaten humankind as a whole. It is regrettable to see the setbacks in the United Nations disarmament machinery that have occurred in the past decade.

The pursuit of the development of nuclear, biological and chemical technologies by developed States and the rivalry among them are dangerous, even if they are undertaken in the name of preventive deterrence and strengthening national security, despite all international treaties and documents that prohibit such practices. My delegation stresses the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation for the achievement of international peace and security. We are concerned when the nuclear-weapon States do not live up to their commitments in that regard.

We note the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which did not yield an outcome document because of the inability to reach consensus on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which could lead to the worsening of regional and international peace and security. We invite those States that have not yet ratified the Pelindaba Treaty to do so as soon as possible. We reaffirm the full, unconditional and non-selective right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear power, as well as its use for scientific research.

The Sudan is an active partner in international disarmament efforts. It was one of the first States to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and was at the forefront of efforts aimed at making Africa a zone free of nuclear weapons,

pursuant to the Treaty of Pelindaba. We were also an early signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to which we acceded in 2004. Furthermore, the Sudan has supported the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and participated in all regional workshops and international conferences on the issue.

In addition to the Sudan's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, the Sudan attaches particular importance to the issue of small arms and light weapons because, like many other small countries in the world, it has been suffering from the proliferation of such weapons, which have exacerbated regional conflicts and led to thousands of deaths every year. They have also been linked to economic issues, which themselves have been complicated by natural disasters such as desertification and drought as the result of climate change. With the shrinkage of pasture land and the decrease in water sources, the proliferation of weapons has become a sign of power in the eyes of those residing in our region. Therefore, because we understand the danger of the phenomenon, my Government is committed to combating these types of weapons.

Furthermore, the Sudan has been active and present in all international and regional forums and has been active in making its own national efforts through our national office for small arms and light weapons. We are convinced that there is a link between the spread of these weapons and organized crime, drug trafficking and terrorism.

The Sudan is at the forefront of multidisciplinary efforts by the League of Arab States, the Group of African States and other regional organizations — and in bilateral efforts with neighbouring countries — aimed at protecting borders and ensuring customs control. When these efforts were reviewed, we noted that combating the spread of these weapons must begin with the manufacturing countries and not the countries that are merely suffering from the phenomenon. Manufacturing countries must commit to not providing these weapons to groups or individuals. This is both necessary and vital. Technical assistance must be provided to the countries affected by this scourge, in accordance with Chapter II of the United Nations Programme of Action.

Lastly, we all agree that the 2006 Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development stressed the interlinkages between development and armed conflict. This must be taken into account when the Security Council takes up conflicts in developing countries and peacekeeping operations. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes must take priority over other matters in dealing with existing conflict zones. That is also why it is important to emphasize the development dimension, since the common element in many conflicts is a lack of resources and development, together with such natural disasters as desertification and drought resulting from climate change.

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker on the list for this meeting.

(*spoke in English*)

I shall now give the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I would like to remind delegations that the number of interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting is limited to two and that the first intervention should be limited to 10 minutes and the second to five minutes.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I am taking the floor to exercise my delegation's right of reply.

I reject the allegations made against Iran and the lies told about it by the representative of the Israeli regime. It is no surprise that there are no limits to the ability of the officials of the Israeli regime to lie and engage in disinformation campaigns against Iran in order to divert attention from the threats emanating from Israel's destabilizing actions and policies in the Middle East. The Israeli regime's entire history is filled with major acts of aggression against its neighbours and other countries in the Middle East and beyond — at least 14 times since 1948.

Furthermore, Israel continues to flout all international regimes governing weapons of mass destruction by refusing to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Israel is therefore the only obstacle to establishing a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Indeed, nuclear weapons in the hands of that regime pose the most serious threat to the security of all States in the Middle East, as well as to the non-proliferation regime.

The representative of the Israeli regime spoke of the need to comply with and respect international obligations. He should remember that his regime has arrogantly and flagrantly violated at least 86 resolutions — I repeat, 86 resolutions — adopted by the Security Council between 1948 to 2016, as a result of Israel's acts of aggression and occupation, as well as its well-documented atrocities and war crimes against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples. That appalling track record affords no moral standing or credibility for the Israeli regime to render judgment about others' compliance with Security Council resolutions.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we wish to express our sympathy and solidarity with the leadership, Government and people of our friend the Russian Federation, and to offer our deepest condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims.

The representative of the Israeli entity made a statement this morning that tramples on every norm, surprising us with its hypocrisy and lies and making accusations against other States. As we know, people who live in glass houses should not throw stones. We are all aware that the Israeli entity has introduced terrorism, including nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological terrorism to our region. It provides every type of aid, weapons, munitions, intelligence and technology to terrorist groups in Syria, in particular Da'esh, the Al-Nusra Front and their affiliates, as well as toxic chemicals and training on how to use them. As is well known, that regime violates all Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism.

All reports, investigations and studies reaffirm that in the Middle East the Israeli protectorate is the only country that possesses a nuclear arsenal. It also has the largest arsenal of chemical and biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery, with a range that goes well beyond the Middle East. International reports have also confirmed beyond any doubt that Israel has used biological and chemical weapons many times against the peoples in the region — in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine — and that it has been using white phosphorus and uranium from 1948 to the present day.

In the firm belief that the use of weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons, is unacceptable and unethical and to be condemned, and in the importance of establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and with the goal of proving to the whole world its commitment to standing against any use of chemical weapons, my country acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention. In 2003, while serving as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, we proposed a draft resolution aimed at creating a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons. However, at the time Syria's efforts were hindered by a country that is influential in the Security Council and that threatened to abort the draft resolution.

In his ridiculous, theatrical statement, the representative of the Israeli tried desperately to mislead the Disarmament Commission by making false and unfounded claims designed to distract attention from the dangers of Israeli nuclear weapons, from Israel's lack of respect for the resolutions on nuclear non-proliferation and from the fact that it has yet to become party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and has not put its installations under the control of the International Atomic Energy Agency. Moreover, Israel has refused to become a party to treaties prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, whether chemical or biological. As is usual when Israel's position is fragile and weak, we see the representatives of its regime propagate falsehoods, confuse issues, reverse the truth completely and evade accountability concerning the crimes and attacks committed by the regime.

It is a well-known fact that Israeli officers are responsible for illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We only have to look at the zones of tension in the world and we can see that the illegitimate weapons traffickers there are Israeli.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.363

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

363rd meeting
Monday, 3 April 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

Chair: Ms. Martinic.....(Argentina)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Organization of work (*continued*)

The Chair: Before the Commission continues with the general exchange of views, it will revert to item 3, "Organization of work", of its provisional agenda, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.78, in order to elect the officers of the Disarmament Commission.

Election of other officers (*continued*)

The Chair: I have been informed that the Group of African States has endorsed the candidature of Mr. Hamza Alokly, Second Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Libya to the United Nations, as Vice-Chair from the Group of African States.

If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Commission wishes to elect Mr. Alokly as Vice-Chair of the Commission at its 2017 substantive session by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chair: On behalf of the Commission, I would like to warmly congratulate the newly elected Vice-Chair of the Commission and to wish him success in discharging his duties. We will take up the election of one remaining Vice-Chair from the Group of African States at a later stage.

General debate (*continued*)

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): The Commission will now continue the general debate with the list of speakers inscribed for the general debate. I urge those delegations that have not yet done so to inscribe their names on the list as soon as possible.

To maximize the time available to us during the general exchange of views, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor. I would also like to remind all delegations that are already on the list to keep in mind that a rolling list implies that they should be prepared to speak at any time, possibly sooner than they had originally planned. I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the length of statements of 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of groups, and 10 minutes for delegations making statements in their national capacity.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to begin by congratulating you, Madam Chair, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to lead the Disarmament Commission at its 2017 substantive session. We are pleased that you, as a representative of our Latin American and Caribbean region, are in charge of directing the work of this important part of the United Nations disarmament machinery. You can count on our full support in your efforts to achieve our stated goals.

Venezuela would also like to express its heartfelt condolences to the people and authorities of the Russian Federation for the loss of life resulting from today's terrorist attack at a train station in Saint Petersburg.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

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My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered earlier today by the representatives of Indonesia and El Salvador on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

The Disarmament Commission begins its substantive work in 2017 against the backdrop of an international political arena fraught with challenges to international peace and security. In that regard, the promotion of multilateral disarmament measures and agreements is undermined by the inability of military powers to advance the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. We are concerned about the risk of the triggering a new arms race with grave implications for peace following the greatest military power's announcement that it intends to increase its military budget. Also concerning are interventionist and aggressive actions carried out by countries against duly constituted Governments, which negatively affect international peace and security, in flagrant violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Disarmament Commission, which gathers us here once again at this session to formulate recommendations on disarmament, this year faces the challenge of overcoming the paralysis that has plagued it for 18 years, as it has been unable to adopt substantive recommendations due to a lack of will of a minority group of member States. In that connection, we recall that important results were achieved at previous sessions of the Disarmament Commission, such as the 1988 principles of verification, the 1996 guidelines for international arms transfers and the 1999 guidelines for the establishment of nuclear-weapon free zones.

We therefore reiterate the urgent need to attain concrete results on the eve of the conclusion of this three-year cycle of the work of the Commission. We urge nuclear-weapon States to show real commitment and flexibility in order to meet the objectives that have been set for this cycle of the mandate. The objective of eliminating nuclear weapons is a political and moral imperative that binds all States Members of the Organization, particularly nuclear-weapon States. We must not forget that over 70 years ago, the nuclear bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki marked some of the darkest chapters in the history of humankind. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the main priority of the disarmament and international security agenda.

Our discussions in this forum must help strengthen the standards, principles, obligations and commitments of nuclear disarmament, as agreed in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament (resolution S-10/2), as must the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the results of its review conferences. The impetus, enthusiasm and participation of the delegations that participated in the recently concluded first session of the United Nations Conference on the negotiation of a legally binding instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons, pending their total elimination, showed the interest and commitment of most States that attended that historic session to tackle one of the gravest threats to human beings, despite the non-attendance of the nuclear-weapon States, which benefit from their so-called security.

Venezuela believes that the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the prohibition of nuclear weapons reinforces article VI of the NPT. As such, it will provide specific guidance on which effective and concrete measures ought to be adopted if we are to keep our commitments to rid ourselves of nuclear weapons. The Treaty must provide a good foundation for carrying out the provisions of resolution 68/32, sponsored by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The resolution establishes the holding of a high-level international conference by 2018, at the latest, to consider the elements to include in a broad nuclear-weapon convention that would spell out general obligations, prohibitions and practical measures for irreversible and verifiable nuclear disarmament, with concrete deadlines.

Venezuela, as a State signatory to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, which established the world's first nuclear-weapon free zone 50 years ago in Latin America and the Caribbean, a densely populated area of the planet, reiterates that the creation of nuclear-weapon free zones based on agreements undertaken freely by regional countries is an essential step in the consolidation of international peace and security and also contributes to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

We also reaffirm our commitment to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon free zone in the Middle East, pursuant to the agreements reached by the NPT States parties in 1995, 2000 and 2010. We regret that the 2015 NPT Review Conference was

blocked by the unwillingness of a small group of States to adopt a final document. We once again call on all parties to put aside their agendas in order to ensure the denuclearization of the entire planet, especially the Middle East.

Our delegation is of the view that practical confidence-building measures in the sphere of conventional weapons play an important role in the promotion of understanding, transparency and cooperation among States, as well as in increased security and stability — in keeping with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and respecting their voluntary implementation and the specific concerns and security situations of different countries.

Venezuela has been promoting confidence- and security-building measures in the context of the Union of South American Nations by exchanging information and remaining transparent on defence spending and military activities, security measures, guarantees, implementation and verification — with a view to contributing to the consolidation of regional and international peace and security.

In conclusion, Venezuela reaffirms the importance of the Disarmament Commission as the only specialized deliberative body of the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. We therefore reaffirm our will to work alongside all Member States to make concrete and significant disarmament gains.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): On behalf of the United States delegation, please allow me to congratulate you, Madam Chair, and the Government of Argentina on your election to chair the Disarmament Commission at its 2017 session of. Your expertise in this field is well known and well regarded, and we look forward to working with you as you ably discharge your important duties.

Let us also express our appreciation to Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament, for his support of this important body.

This year's Disarmament Commission session straddles two other multilateral events relevant to our own work — the nuclear ban treaty negotiations, which just ended its first session last week here, in New York, and the 2017 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, which begins on 2 May. At this opportune moment, please allow me to explain the position of the United States towards both of those processes.

The 2016 Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on nuclear disarmament, which did not operate by consensus, produced a final report that predictably included language calling for a nuclear-weapons ban treaty. Countries leading the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons initiative used that language as the basis for resolution 71/258 during the 2016 session of the First Committee to launch negotiations for a nuclear-weapons ban treaty, which began on 27 March. Importantly, the OEWG reports, the General Assembly resolution and now, the negotiations themselves, have all been opposed by a significant number of States, including both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. The element of consensus that underpins successful disarmament initiatives is entirely lacking. We oppose the report and note that many other countries joined us in opposition to this ill-conceived endeavour.

A ban treaty will come at enormous cost to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) political process without securing the elimination of a single nuclear warhead or improving the security of any State. It risks deepening the divide between States, polarizing the political environment on nuclear disarmament and further complicating future prospects for achieving consensus, whether in the NPT review process, the United Nations or the Conference on Disarmament.

Moreover, a ban treaty ignores the essential connection between disarmament and international security conditions, a connection that is acknowledged in the NPT's preamble and in consensus decisions of its review conferences. By doing so, it seems to delegitimize the extended deterrence relationships on which many of our allies rely. For these reasons, the United States opposed the OEWG, opposed the ban treaty resolution (resolution 71/75) and will not participate in negotiations on a ban treaty.

The NPT remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Without the non-proliferation guarantees that it was designed to help ensure, it will be impossible to achieve the disarmament goals that remain our long-term objective. We look forward to the first Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2020 Review Conference. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, in 2020, it is important to recall the NPT's

role in helping prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons and providing enormous security benefits to all States. We urge all NPT parties to reflect on how the NPT supports our common fundamental interests and how all can contribute to strengthening the NPT in defence of these interests.

As the 2020 review process gets under way, there is a clear need to restore balance to the NPT dialogue. The United States is in the midst of a review whose purpose is to consider those approaches that would best achieve that outcome, all in support of enhancing national security. We urge all NPT parties to reject the false divisions over the best way to proceed on disarmament and the Middle East, so that they do not hamper consensus during this NPT review cycle.

Together we must engage in a respectful dialogue requiring that we not only defend and explain our own points of view but also that we genuinely listen to the points of view of others. Indeed, there is much discussion and listening needed from all parties in seeking to advance our common interests, including on cases of non-compliance, expanding nuclear arsenals in some countries, the difficult international security environment, achieving conditions that facilitate progress on disarmament, and applying nuclear energy to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

It is unfortunate that in recent years some have suggested that multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation can be pursued without the consensus of all participants. The abandonment by some States and many non-governmental organizations of the consensus approach in this field because it is too difficult or taking too long is a major source of the division that we are facing today. It has been counterproductive to making real progress on disarmament and should be rejected.

We should take up again once again the culture of consensus-building and consensus decision-making that has yielded far more successes over the past 50 years than disappointments and will do so again if we are patient and persistent.

This year we are set to conclude work on the Commission's current triennial issues cycle, which has focused since 2015 on two long-standing agenda items: in Working Group I, recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and, in Working Group II, practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. We thank our colleagues from Kazakhstan and Morocco, respectively, for their effective chairmanships of these Working Groups over the last two years and will work actively with the representatives of Bulgaria and Venezuela, also respectively, as they assume these posts in this critical final year of our present agenda.

Last year both Working Group chairs drafted non-papers for ongoing consideration. Our deliberations on the topics before us have been frank and useful. From the United States perspective, and because of a number of ongoing or forthcoming national policy reviews, some of the language in the existing non-papers will need to be altered or removed so that we can arrive at a consensus outcome in three weeks' time. While this will not be an easy task, if we work together and are modest in our ambitions, the Commission can achieve a positive result.

The United States was pleased that General Assembly resolution 71/82, which conveyed the Commission's annual report to the Assembly, also contains a provision encouraging the Commission to hold informal consultations at the 2017 session on the practical implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. We are prepared to engage substantively in these discussions and encourage others to do the same.

Finally, as we work to finalize our efforts on the issues before the Disarmament Commission this year, the United States pledges to do all it can to facilitate a positive outcome. We look forward to working with you, Madam Chair, and the members of the Commission as we pursue this important objective.

Mr. Korneliou (Cyprus): At the outset, Madam Chair, on behalf of the Cyprus delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at this session and wish you every success in discharging your duties. We are convinced that your rich diplomatic experience will lead this session forward, and I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

I would like also to thank the Disarmament Commission for its efforts in adopting guidelines and recommendations on disarmament issues. Cyprus also joins previous speakers in extending our condolences and support to the Russian delegation following today's events in Saint Petersburg.

International peace and stability constitute the primary objective of Cyprus's foreign policy. Cyprus remains committed to substantive progress in all relevant disarmament forums. In this spirit, Cyprus has signed and ratified all the main disarmament and non-proliferation treaties. In the same context, and in accordance with the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), Cyprus submits regular reports on its implementation. We have also been a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Australia Group since 2000.

Cyprus also aspires to accede to the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Wassenaar Arrangement and earnestly hopes that the objections raised by one country in this regard will at last be shelved, thus sparing all of us from such unmerited politicization, which only jeopardizes the purpose of these treaties.

Furthermore, Cyprus signed the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation in 2002 and has participated in the Proliferation Security Initiative since 2005. In May 2015, Cyprus co-hosted, with the United States of America, a successful tabletop regional exercise in the framework of the Initiative in an effort to promote regional cooperation in counter-proliferation efforts.

Bearing in mind the fact that that the risk posed by nuclear weapons is too great to ignore, and fully understanding the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of their use, Cyprus has consistently been a strong advocate of multilateral cooperation and inclusiveness in the pursuit of common objectives. Our strong commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament is also concretely expressed through our efforts to be vigilant as to the threat of the spread of weapons of mass destruction in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East region.

In the area of outer space, we value the contribution of confidence-building measures in the field, and we consider it essential that States continue to work collectively to keep it safe and secure and free from conflict for the benefit of all humankind.

In conclusion, once again, let me express our hope that the Disarmament Commission will overcome any deadlock, achieve progress and issue recommendations as tasked. The Commission can rest assured of the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Cyprus. We look forward to contributing to the discussion ahead.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): Before I begin my statement, I would like to extend our condolences to the Russian Federation following today's horrible terrorist attacks.

We thank the former Chair and his team for the efforts during the previous session. We congratulate you, Madam Chair, and assure you and the Bureau of our full support during this session. We also welcome the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who participated in this morning's meeting, and thank him for the valuable work he has done.

We recognize the important role that the Disarmament Commission was designed to play as the specialized deliberative subsidiary body of the General Assembly that allows for in-depth deliberations on specific disarmament issues. Especially against the backdrop of the present polarization within the disarmament community, the Disarmament Commission has a very important role to play in providing a platform for enhancing dialogue and cooperation, as well as a sincere exchange of views. As this is the final year of the present cycle, we will be able to build upon what has been done in the past two years. That said, I would like to thank the former Chairs, Kazakhstan and Morocco, for their work and look forward to working with the new Chairs and to supporting them in any way we can. We also look forward to discussions on a possible third agenda item.

Mr. Gutiérrez Blanco Navarrete (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, I would like to echo my colleagues in offering condolences on behalf of my delegation following the terrorist attack that occurred in Saint Petersburg and to convey our full support to the Russian Government and the families of the victims.

I congratulate you, Madam Chair, as well as the Vice-Chairs and Chairs of the Working Groups, on your elections. As you said, we must retain the role of the Disarmament Commission as a platform for dialogue and building trust, particularly given the fact that we face uncertain times and new threats to international peace and security.

We have all worked hard over the past two years and are now at the end of a three-year cycle. There are elements for consensus, and so we should achieve tangible results. If not, our efforts and the Organization's resources will have been expended in vain. Now that we are all gathered here today, we can send a very clear message. Let us shoulder our responsibility to

build a safer world. The Commission can count on my delegation's support in that endeavour.

I would also like to thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for the excellent work done in supporting disarmament efforts at the United Nations.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. It is the foundation for making progress on nuclear disarmament and an important element in developing peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We believe that the commencement of the review cycle, beginning with the meeting, in May, of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties, will allow for greater implementation of the Treaty by balancing its three pillars. In that effort, the 2010 Action Plan is a valuable instrument because it was born out of consensus.

Spain is committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons. We are ambitious and we are also concerned about the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons. We are also realistic and understand that the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons must be achieved gradually, in accordance with article VI of the NPT and by considering the security dimension and the position of nuclear-weapon States. We call on those States, in particular those that have an even greater responsibility because of the size of their arsenals, to gradually reduce those arsenals and implement transparency and confidence-building measures.

Spain firmly believes in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, and we are therefore frustrated by the fact that a conference to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East has still not been held. As the Commission knows, the Spanish delegation worked hard on that endeavour during the most recent NPT Review Conference. We encourage all countries of the region to agree on the terms that would allow for the holding an inclusive conference as soon as possible. The immediate challenges of negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty and promoting the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty are key opportunities to demonstrate a firm and bold willingness to move towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

With regard to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, my delegation co-sponsored Security Council resolution 2310 (2016), which reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty and helped to strengthen the nuclear-test ban as a de facto international norm. We urge those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty, in particular the annex 2 States, to do so as soon as possible. With regard to the fissile material cut-off treaty, we welcome the recent establishment of the high-level expert preparatory group that will prepare recommendations on the treaty. From a technical and political perspective, we believe that there is a solid foundation on which to start negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

Verification is another key element in the disarmament process. We welcome the opportunities offered by resolution 71/450. We believe that the Commission will pay due attention to that issue.

Spain is firmly committed to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as we demonstrated during the biennium 2015-2017 when we assumed the chairmanship of the three Security Council non-proliferation committees. We believe that that is the greatest threat the world faces today. Furthermore, the growing risk of terrorists and other non-State actors using weapons of mass destruction spurred efforts on the comprehensive review of the status of implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which my country was honoured to lead. Those efforts were transparent, consultative and participatory. The review bore fruit with the adoption of Security Council resolution 2325 (2016), which was adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, born of consensus and sponsored by 77 States, including all members of the Security Council. That text shows that it is possible to reach consensus on such complex issues as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In conclusion, the term weapons of mass destruction is often used, but I stress that we should not forget that conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, claim the most victims. They also have an adverse impact on the security and development of States. That is why we are optimistic about the progress being made in preparing for the third Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, we support the efforts of France's chairship and pledge our full support.

Similarly, we note that the number of States that have ratified the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is increasing and take this opportunity to encourage all States to ratify it so as to achieve its universalization, which is vital to international peace and security.

Lastly, my delegation welcomes the inclusion of outer space as a third item of the agenda. Outer space must be a secure and stable place. It must be used in a peaceful manner based on equitable and multilaterally accepted norms. Accordingly, we encourage confidence- and transparency-building measures, including the adoption of principles of responsible conduct in outer space.

Mr. Bessedik (Algeria) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is truly a pleasure to see you, Madam, in your function as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I will deliver my statement in English.

(*spoke in English*)

At the outset, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election to head the 2017 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, and you can obviously count on our full support and cooperation. I extend my congratulations to the Chairs of the Working Groups on their respective elections.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia, the representative of Cameroon and the representative of Qatar on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Algeria attaches the utmost importance to general and complete disarmament as a means of ensuring international peace and security, and reiterates its continued commitment to multilateral diplomacy as the core principle of negotiation with regard to the disarmament agenda. In that context, my delegation reaffirms the central role of the United Nations as a universal, multilateral forum to address disarmament issues, as well as the relevance and centrality of the Disarmament Commission, and stresses the particular importance of this session, which comes at the end of the current cycle. The Commission is expected to adopt recommendations related to its two substantive agenda items, and we look forward to seeing it fulfil its mandate and achieve a meaningful outcome so as to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, my delegation calls on all Member States to show the political will and flexibility necessary to enable the UNDC to reach agreement on substantive recommendations to the General Assembly.

As a State party to the main treaties related to nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, my delegation reaffirms that nuclear disarmament remains its highest priority and reiterates its concern about the existence of nuclear weapons and their potential use or threat of use. In that context, the only guarantee against nuclear weapons lies in their total elimination with a view to achieving a world free of nuclear danger. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to again stress the need to universalize the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and ensure compliance in a balanced and comprehensive manner with each of its three pillars. In that regard, my delegation reaffirms the legitimate right to develop research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Like many Member States, we note with deep regret the clear lack of progress in the process of the multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations, in particular with regard to the implementation of the 13 measures to realize nuclear disarmament agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and the plan of action adopted at the 2010 Review Conference. My delegation reaffirms that nuclear-weapon States in particular have to fully comply with the NPT's obligations and specifically the provisions for nuclear-disarmament goals.

Algeria reiterates its deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would be caused by the detonation of a nuclear weapon. With that firm conviction, my country has endorsed the humanitarian pledge in its efforts to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. In that context, last week, my delegation welcomed the holding of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, and we encourage all member States to participate in that process so as to consolidate the other existing nuclear-disarmament instruments. My delegation reiterates its call for the convening of a high-level conference in 2018 to review progress achieved on nuclear disarmament, and emphasizes the need for early and appropriate preparations so as to ensure a successful conference. Algeria stresses the importance of achieving universal adherence to the

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to allow its entry into force and contribute to the global process of nuclear disarmament.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes not only a confidence-building measure but also an important step towards achieving nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation goals. Algeria, which was one of the first countries to draft, sign and ratify the Treaty of Pelindaba, in particular, calls on nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the relevant annexes to the Treaty. Furthermore, the example of the Treaty of Pelindaba and other instruments calling for nuclear-free-zones should also be followed in the volatile region of the Middle East. In that context, my delegation deeply regrets that that part of the world is still prevented from establishing, and deprived of enjoying, such a zone despite the adoption by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference of the resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the region. My delegation reaffirms that the 1995 resolution on the Middle East remains valid and stresses its strong commitment to its full implementation.

Concerning the issue of conventional arms, my delegation would like to stress that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to threaten peace and stability in many countries and regions, particularly in North Africa and the Sahel region, and constitutes a source of supply to terrorist groups and organized crime. Based on its national experience, my delegation reaffirms that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons are more than ever of the utmost relevance. We continue to emphasize the importance of their full, balanced and effective implementation. My delegation would also like to stress that international cooperation and assistance are essential to the implementation of those two instruments.

In that context, my delegation welcomes the adoption by consensus last year of the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and looks forward to further actions aimed at eliminating those weapons in advance of the third Review Conference of the Programme of Action to be held in 2018. With regard to the issue of confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, my delegation underlines that, in pursuing the goal of contributing to international peace and security, such measures should be undertaken in full conformity with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

My delegation would like to underline the progress made last year by the working group on conventional weapons, and we hope that at this session there will be a consensus on meaningful recommendations.

I would like to conclude by expressing the hope that all Member States will show the political will and flexibility necessary to allow the UNDC to achieve success in its session.

Mr. Gallhofer (Austria): We congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your chairpersonship. We look forward to finalizing our work for this cycle guided by your excellent leadership and that of the two Working Group Chairs to allow the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) to live up to its mandate, as set out at the tenth special session of the General Assembly, by building on the concrete progress achieved in other forums, and to agree on concrete recommendations to be submitted to the General Assembly.

Austria remains fully committed to substantive progress in all relevant disarmament forums, and especially in the General Assembly under Article 11 of the Charter. As we are aware, the deliberations on nuclear disarmament have gained significant momentum in recent years. Based on the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the humanitarian initiative on the impact of and the risks associated with nuclear weapons has provided a set of arguments for urgent progress on nuclear disarmament and for moving away from a nuclear-weapon-based security system.

The humanitarian pledge builds upon these arguments and draws conclusions that should be drawn from the new evidence and formulates a different set of priorities. It stipulates that humanitarian concerns should be at the centre of all deliberations, obligations and commitments with regard to nuclear disarmament. It underscores the importance of the protection of civilians against risks related to nuclear weapons, and

lists a number of interim measures to reduce the risk of nuclear-weapon detonations. Finally, it highlights the urgent need to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons in the light of the unacceptable humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the risks associated with them.

Building on the clear recommendations of last year's Open-ended Working Group in Geneva, the General Assembly, with a two-thirds majority of States present and voting, adopted resolution 71/258, entitled "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations". Through that resolution, the General Assembly decided to convene in 2017 a conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. This is a major breakthrough from the decades-long standstill of multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament and a long-overdue fulfilment of article VI of the NPT.

The first session of the negotiations just finished and showed a strong, united will to achieve a clear prohibition of nuclear weapons — and a strong sense of urgency. As our Vice-Minister Alexander Marschik put it last week in the General Assembly Hall during the high-level segment:

> "Waiting for disaster is not a strategy. That is disrespectful of the victims of nuclear weapons, past and future. There is a right time to begin the process of prohibiting nuclear weapons. That time is now."

In that spirit, we aspire to complete our negotiations on the basis of the Chair's first draft at the upcoming June/July session of the conference. Austria has been arguing for a strong, lean prohibition treaty. Details of our position can be found in our statements available on PaperSmart.

That clear political will and urgency should also be reflected in the deliberations of the UNDC and the recommendations we are tasked to provide to the General Assembly. Extending the status quo or even accepting the strengthening of nuclear arsenals by modernization is clearly unacceptable to the overwhelming majority of States. We look forward to constructive discussions to finish this session by agreeing a text that reflects our common desire of a world free of nuclear weapons and the expectations of peoples from all around the globe.

We also look forward to constructive engagement in the upcoming NPT Preparatory Committee in Vienna. Austria remains fully committed to the NPT as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the NPT, and an important element in the further development of nuclear-energy applications for peaceful purposes. Austria is committed to upholding and preserving the NPT as a key priority. Likewise, my country continues to be a strong supporter of an early start to negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We look forward to seeing the relevant High-level Expert Preparatory Group deliver tangible results and to examining its report in the Committee on Disarmament.

Austria fully acknowledges the inalienable right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy as reflected in Article IV of the NPT. But in any case, this right ought to be executed applying the highest standards of safety, security, waste management and non-proliferation. Austrian constitutional law, however, prohibits not only nuclear weapons, but also facilities with the purpose of obtaining energy by nuclear fission. That is also reaffirmed in the Austrian Government's commitment to our anti-nuclear-power policy, taking into account the principle of free choice of energy mix. That paramount principle was reconfirmed in resolution 66/288, endorsing the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, recognizing that the activities of countries in broader energy-related matters are of great importance and are prioritized according to their specific challenges, capacities and circumstances, including their energy mix.

Against that backdrop, it is evident that any formulation that might be construed as promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy for power generation in a generalized manner would be inconsistent with the aforementioned outcome reached at the highest political level. Moreover, as my delegation repeatedly stressed during the last triennial cycle, any discussions on this topic are to be conducted in the relevant forums, as set out by the General Assembly, notably in its resolution 1145 (XII) pertaining to the relationship between the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In the area of conventional weapons, we value the contribution that practical confidence-building measures can make to the maintenance and enhancement of regional and international peace and security. For this cycle we continue to recommend taking into consideration the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and in particular from the effects of the use of conventional weapons. Among this, the devastating effects of the use of explosive weapons with wide area effect in populated areas are of particular concern. As the former Secretary-General reaffirmed in his most recent report on the protection of civilians,

> "when explosive weapons had been used in populated areas, an astonishing 92 per cent of those killed or injured were civilians" (*S/2016/447, para. 3*).

Austria, together with like-minded countries and civil society, continues to promote progress in that area.

A further area of strong concern for Austria is lethal autonomous weapons and their compatibility with international humanitarian law. We look forward to the report of the Group of Governmental Experts at the annual meeting of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, in November 2017.

As Chair of the sixteenth meeting of States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Austria is concerned about the sharp rise in the number of people killed in 2015. Our chairmanship priorities were announced in Santiago at the end of last year. They centre on universalization, victim assistance, mine clearance, stockpile destruction and making progress on budgetary issues.

We strongly welcome the improvements made to the Register of Conventional Arms, among other things by including small arms and light weapons on a trial basis. We call on all States to report regularly to the register and to take advantage of help offered, if so required.

Lastly, let me underline the importance Austria attaches to the landmark Arms Trade Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

On working methods, as last year, we would advocate for an invitation to the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to provide relevant expertise — for example via video-link — as provided for in resolution 61/98. Furthermore, taking into account the important and extremely useful contributions of civil society to disarmament in various forums, we would also strongly encourage its increased interaction with the UNDC. There are many ways to integrate this — for example by holding informal sessions in the format of interactive dialogues with experts from academia, non-governmental organizations or other relevant institutions in order to deepen our knowledge and to allow for proposals of possible bridging pathways to energize the work of the Commission — something that is very sorely missing.

In conclusion, let me express once more my hope that the UNDC can overcome its deadlock, achieve concrete progress and issue recommendations as tasked through its mandate. We encourage you, Madam Chair, to continue to seek ways to improve working methods and enable more constructive and focused deliberations.

Mr. Gone (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to extend my heartfelt condolences to the Russian Government and people in the aftermath of the attack in Saint Petersburg this morning and to convey my wishes for a speedy recovery for the wounded.

On behalf of the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire, I wish to congratulate you, Madam Chair, and through you, your country, on your election to chair the work of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Your experience and leadership are a real asset, and it is hoped that under your chairmanship the Commission will finally be able to emerge from the stagnation in which it has been mired for far too long. I also congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Odo Tevi, whose experience contributed to the success of the last session.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia and Cameroon on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (A/CN.10/PV.362).

The work of the 2017 substantive session is taking place in a global security context that remains very complex. Indeed, our planet continues to harbour more than 15,000 nuclear weapons. Military budgets are on the rise again. Ballistic missiles are positioned and revive tensions in several parts of the world.

Conventional weapons continue to fuel conflicts and keep several States instable. Terrorism has now spread to virtually every country in the world.

Meanwhile, as has been noted, since 2000 the Disarmament Commission has been unable to fulfil its mandate to make recommendations to the Assembly. This lack of significant progress in the work should be of concern to us. We must move forward. That necessarily means overcoming our differences by putting the issue of disarmament in a perspective of lasting peace and virtuous cooperation between peoples and nations. From this point of view, for my delegation, the voice of multilateralism embodied by the United Nations appears to be an excellent opportunity.

Nuclear weapons are still the only weapons of mass destruction not prohibited by a legally binding instrument. The time has come to admit that disarmament, in order to achieve its goal of a world of peace and progress, must be general, complete and irreversible. In this spirit, doctrines and strategies of nuclear deterrence should be excluded from national defence systems. With regard to the regulation of these weapons, my delegation is convinced that the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 71/258 will help to advance the debate on this subject. Regulating the elimination of nuclear weapons and arsenals, far from undermining the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, would further strengthen it and surely lead to its universality. Furthermore, due to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, my country would like to reaffirm here the right of non-nuclear-weapon States to receive negative security assurances.

More than 20 years after its opening for signature, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remains inapplicable. Although the moratorium on nuclear testing has been generally satisfactory, my delegation would like to call for the responsibility of all parties, particularly the States included in the Treaty's annex 2, to ensure that the Treaty is implemented. It is to be feared that the impasse in the CTBT is affecting other processes, in this case, the future Treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for the manufacture of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, which Côte d'Ivoire will support firmly when the time comes. To that end, my delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the initiators of the informal consultations held on 2 and 3 March, which enabled us to deepen our understanding of the challenges ahead in the forthcoming negotiations.

My delegation attaches great importance to the adoption of recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. Small arms and light weapons, as the statistics show, lead to more than 700,000 victims every year. Small arms and light weapons and their illicit circulation are fuelling terrorism, organized crime and all forms of trafficking, and require more appropriate control by our States. To combat all these scourges, since 2009, Côte d'Ivoire has been marking and tracing the weapons of its defence and security forces through its National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, in accordance with the recommendations of the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

My country, which has already benefited from material and financial support from the European Union, the United Nations Development Programme, Japan, Germany and most recently Great Britain, would welcome the support of other partners to build capacity in arms control, arsenal management and the care of victims. In addition, Côte d'Ivoire would appreciate the assistance of bilateral and multilateral partners, in the context of the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty, which it ratified in 2015.

Mr. Sun Lei (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, on behalf of the Chinese delegation I would like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election as Chair of the current session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I am confident that you will steer the session to positive results. My delegation wishes to assure you and other delegations of its full cooperation. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu, for his work at the previous session of the Commission.

China condemns in the strong terms the terrorist attacks in the Saint Petersburg subway this morning and expresses its profound sorrow at the loss of life. Our hearts and prayers are most sincerely with the grieving families in Russia. China resolutely opposes terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and supports every effort by the Russian side to combat terrorism. In that regard, we will increase our counter-terrorism cooperation at the international level, also with Russia.

At present, the trend of our times towards peace, development and win-win cooperation has gained stronger momentum. Meanwhile, humankind is in an era of profound transformation and change. With increasing security challenges and risks, geopolitical hotspot issues are vexing and difficult to solve. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation processes are faltering, and unconventional security threats are on the rise. Rules and norms on the new and emerging strategy frontiers have yet to be put in place. Global strategic balance and stability is being confronted with challenges. When visiting the United Nations Office at Geneva earlier this year, President Xi Jinping of China set out the proposition to answer the call to action, in view of the current security landscape, to build a community with a shared vision for the future of all humankind.

All countries should pursue common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, create a peaceful and stable international regional security environment, and build a world of lasting peace and common security through win-win cooperation. As a member of the international community, China actively fulfils its due international responsibilities, is willing to be a champion of peace and development and takes a constructive part in global governance. China consistently pursues a national defence policy, which is only defensive in nature, positively advocates for a new concept of international security, constructively takes part in global security governance and promotes the healthy development of international arms-control, disarmament and non-proliferation processes — all of which makes China a staunch force in maintaining world peace and regional stability.

China has made steadfast efforts to consolidate the multilateral disarmament-treaty mechanisms and is committed to strengthening the universality, authority and effectiveness of international arms-control and non-proliferation treaties. As the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons established three pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. All parties should abandon double standards and utilitarianism and implement their respective treaty obligations in a comprehensive, earnest and balanced manner.

At present, there is a widening dispute as to how to advance nuclear disarmament. China believes that nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved overnight and can be taken forward only through an incremental approach, following the principles of maintaining the global strategic balance and undiminished security for all. Negotiations on nuclear disarmament should take place only within the existing international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, such as the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals should take the lead in reducing their nuclear weapons substantially and substantively, thereby creating conditions for the ultimate realization of the complete prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons.

China firmly opposes the proliferation of nuclear weapons in any form and is working towards the diplomatic resolution of regional hotspot nuclear issues. China has signed and ratified all additional protocols to the treaties on nuclear-weapon free zone that are open for signature and will continue to support non-nuclear-weapon States, in accordance with the realities of each particular region, to establish nuclear-weapon free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among regional States.

On the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, China has always supported its early negotiations in the CD and participated constructively in the work of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts. China abstained in the voting in the First Committee on resolution 71/259 because it firmly believes that the CD is the only proper venue for the negotiation of the a fissile material cut-off treaty, and that concluding such a treaty on the basis of the Shannon mandate in the CD is the only way out. At the same time, China is of the view that the participation of more key parties is essential to the negotiation of a treaty.

China is of the view that establishing practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms not only contributes to reducing confrontation, suspicion and misgivings, but also helps promote international and regional disarmament processes. As important mechanisms of transparency and confidence-building measures within the framework of the United Nations, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures have played an active role in enhancing mutual trust among Member States and promoting international peace and security.

China has taken part in the aforementioned mechanisms and submitted annual reports to the United Nations. China also participated in the new round of work of two United Nations Groups of Governmental Experts last year, which contributed to the sound development of both mechanisms. China has always been engaged in conventional-arms-control efforts and attaches great importance to addressing humanitarian concerns raised by the abuse of such weapons. As a High Contracting Party to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects and its five Protocols, China has always supported all work related to the Convention in earnest and honours its obligations under it and its annexed protocols. Since 1998, China has provided more than Y90 million in humanitarian assistance to nearly 40 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America in the form of money, equipment, technical training and donations, among others, and provided training to nearly 500 technical demining experts.

China attaches great importance to combating the illicit trading of small arms and light weapons, actively participating in and earnestly implementing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, China has adopted a host of effective measures on legislation, law enforcement, capacity-building and international cooperation. China played a constructive role in the negotiation of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and attended the conferences of the States parties to the ATT as an observer for two consecutive years. China hopes that the Treaty will contribute to solving the problem arising from the illicit trade of conventional arms, without prejudice to security, sovereignty, the reasonable national defence requirements of each country and legal arms trade among States. China is open to the addition of new agenda items in the light of the new situation and would like to participate constructively in relevant discussions on the issue of de-weaponization of outer space.

As the sole deliberative body in the field of multilateral disarmament within the framework of the United Nations, the Disarmament Commission has played an important role in setting the priority agenda for multilateral disarmament negotiations over the past decades. In the current new circumstances, all parties should face reality, bridge gaps in a pragmatic and positive manner and strive to reach a consensus solution in order to safeguard and enhance the status and role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. China stands ready to work with all parties to make progress during this review cycle, thus providing fresh impetus to the revitalization of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Mr. Alokly (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on being elected to lead the Disarmament Commission at this session. We are fully prepared to support and cooperate with you and the other members of the Bureau.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to Mr. Odo Tevi, the Permanent Representative of Vanuatu, who chaired the Commission at its preceding session. We thank him for his significant work.

On behalf of Libya, I wish to align ourselves with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, Cameroon and Qatar on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.362). I also wish to take this opportunity to express to the Russian Federation our most sincere condolences following the attack. We wish the victims a swift recovery.

The Disarmament Commission is one of the oldest disarmament mechanisms at the United Nations. In January 1951, the General Assembly created the Commission as a deliberative body to deal with disarmament issues at the multilateral level. As the years went by, the Commission defined guidelines and adopted many recommendations. It also achieved consensus regarding certain issues. However, despite consistent efforts to overcome certain obstacles, paralysis has affected its work for more than a decade. That could be explained by a lack of trust, flexibility or will on the part of certain States. The Commission is also suffering now from a lack of deliberation. Libya greatly hopes that the situation will change and that we will take concrete and bold steps forward during the current session.

Over the past decade, much has been undertaken in the area of disarmament. The danger of nuclear weapons remains present. Disarmament remains a priority and a multilateral legal commitment. The only reliable way to ensure that nuclear weapons are not used is through a legally binding document for the elimination of nuclear

weapons. Such an instrument would also eliminate the threat of their use. We are concerned about the lack of progress in the implementation of commitments by nuclear-weapon States in the elimination of their stockpiles, as well as about the commitments made under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and during the NPT review conferences in 1995, 2000 and 2010. We reaffirm that those commitments will remain in effect until they are fully implemented.

A nuclear-weapon free zone, especially in the Middle East, would lead to significant progress towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. During the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, hope was kindled anew by the adoption of a resolution on the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. However, these hopes were ultimately dashed by the failure of the related 2012 and 2015 conferences. Nevertheless, we keep alive the hope that the 2020 NPT Review Conference will lead to success and will strengthen the NPT and its three pillars.

Libya is deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. All States must respect international law, especially international humanitarian law. We welcome the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/258, on multilateral negotiations with a view to eliminating nuclear weapons. In March, pursuant to that resolution, States began negotiations and scheduled a conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, to be held 15 June to 7 July. Libya believes that the conference will be an opportunity to renew commitments made by States parties to the NPT, under article VI of the Treaty. We encourage all States to participate in the conference, including nuclear-weapon States.

Confidence-building measures for conventional weapons should not be confused with disarmament measures or other preconditions. Rather, such measures must lead to conditions favourable to disarmament. With regard to conventional weapons, Libya supports practical initiatives with regard to confidence-building measures. We believe that they will increase transparency and contribute to disarmament. They will also strengthen international peace and security. Nevertheless, such measures must be voluntary, on the basis of consensus among States, and must be gradual. They must also guarantee that States can keep, produce and transfer conventional weapons and their components for purposes of national security. They must be applied in a balanced manner, preserving the interests of all States, not only exporters.

Mr. Yardley (Australia): At the outset, I would like to express our condolences to the Russian Federation for the terrorist attack suffered today in Saint Petersburg.

I congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election to lead the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2017 session. We also congratulate all the Bureau members. You have the full support of the Australian delegation.

This year, the UNDC enters the critical third year of its three-year work cycle. No effort must be spared in achieving a positive outcome. In closing the session last year, the Chair — the Permanent Representative of our good regional neighbour Vanuatu — spoke positively of the common ground achieved in Working Group I and the tangible progress made in Working Group II (see A/CN.10/PV.360). That must be the starting point and the mindset for our work this year. In our deliberations in Working Group I, we must remember that there remains one common objective for the international community to share the overarching goal of bringing about a peaceful and secure world that is free of nuclear weapons.

Australia remains active in pursuit of that common objective. States may differ on the means and sequencing for achieving that goal, but ultimately the international community should focus not on differences but on common ground. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) cycle commences next month, and we look forward to working with Member States to ensure the effectiveness of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. Australia, through the cross-regional Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and the Vienna Group of Ten, will jointly submit working papers to the Preparatory Commission covering issues such as the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and transparency.

As a member of this year's High-level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group, we will be looking to expand on the excellent work

of the 2014-15 Group of Governmental Experts, which produced a robust consensus report (A/70/81) reflecting the most in-depth discussions on the topic to date. We consider a treaty to be the next logical step and an indispensable one in advancing nuclear disarmament, as well as the most practical and effective way of contributing to Global Zero in the current strategic environment.

The current Working Group I draft document rightly refers to the need for effective disarmament measures to be verifiable. Australia will continue to contribute to the ongoing technical and policy work of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification. We also strongly supported the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/67, on nuclear disarmament verification, and applaud Norway for that initiative.

Last year marked the twentieth anniversary of the CTBT's opening for signature. The Treaty has been a successful instrument of international cooperation, effectively establishing a global norm against testing. However, voluntary moratoriums on nuclear explosive tests are no substitute for a permanent and legally binding commitment to end nuclear testing and all other nuclear explosions. That can be achieved only by the entry into force of the Treaty. This year's Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to be held in September, will be important in driving us towards that goal.

Australia, through its working paper to the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, has been seeking to reinvigorate that process by promoting a practical, outcome-focused approach, or "niche approach", as we have referred to it. The broad ranging discussions on disarmament issues we hold here in the UNDC and elsewhere are extremely useful, but do not need to be duplicated at every disarmament forum. The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I) could establish itself as a unique forum for taking forward specific issues in the SSOD I programme of action in a manageable way. We hope that Member States can support such an approach when we meet later this year.

A positive outcome in the UNDC Working Group II on conventional weapons would be an ideal contribution to the forthcoming third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects that will take place next year. We commend France for its leadership as President-designate of the Conference in starting the consultation process early. Australia will participate constructively in that process. Australia will also continue to work towards the universalization of the Arms Trade Treaty, including through partnering with civil society; contributing to the United Nations Trust Facility Supporting Cooperation on Arms Regulation and the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund; and working closely with States across the Indo-Pacific region and elsewhere to build understanding of the Treaty and capacity to implement it. We strongly encourage further signatories and ratifications.

In conclusion, I would like to again call on all delegations to focus on common ground. There has never been a more important time for the UNDC to achieve a positive outcome.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I wish to express our gratitude for the condolences and solidarity conveyed by many delegations over the explosions in the Saint Petersburg subway. That expression of solidarity at this moment is very important to us.

The Russian Federation continues to support the strengthening of the central role of the United Nations in the maintenance of global strategic stability and international security, as well as the consolidation of the arms-control and disarmament regimes. It is essential to move further in reinvigorating the United Nations disarmament machinery, with the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) as an integral component. However, we are fully aware of the complexity of the tasks we are facing.

The efficient work of the Commission is stymied by the same issues, foremost among which is the inability and sometimes even the simple lack of will to allow reasonable compromises for the sake of consensus. We are concluding another three-year cycle of the UNDC. The Russian delegation is always willing to do its utmost for the sake of achieving a productive outcome to our substantive discussions on the key items of the agenda, namely, the elaboration of recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

The Russian Federation fully shares the noble aim of building a nuclear-free world and reaffirms that principled position through concrete steps. For the third decade in a row, we have consistently carried out a step-by-step, large-scale and unprecedented reduction of Russian nuclear arsenals. Currently, we are moving towards the full-scale implementation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms. The question, however, is how to achieve that goal. Further progress in the field of nuclear disarmament will be impossible without serious preparatory work. The fundamental principle must be strengthened strategic stability and equal and undiminished security for all States, without exception.

We believe that at this stage, serious joint efforts to create conditions conducive to nuclear disarmament should be a priority. We have repeatedly drawn attention to the alarming situation we face due to the unilateral and unconstrained development of the United States missile defence assets in various regions of the world, which has stalled the overall process. While the Iran nuclear programme, which was used as justification for the United States missile defence in Europe, is no longer a pressing issue, the United States has taken no corresponding steps in response.

Moreover, we are seeing a global and destabilizing expansion of the United States missile defence system. We still have no sense of the target of all of those massively expensive preparations, which do not reflect current or future challenges and threats. Such factors as the development of conventionally armed strategic weapons, the unwillingness to abandon plans to place weapons in outer space and unresolved issues concerning the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty by a State that initiated it have all had a negative impact. The growing imbalances in the quantity and quality of conventional weapons are equally not conducive to stability in modern international relations. All of those problems need to be resolved.

That is the very essence of the current situation — there are no alternatives. Moreover, that approach has been endorsed through the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) review process. The task of delivering humankind from nuclear threats is extremely complex and multifaceted. It has no simple solutions. It would be a big mistake to assume that the problem of eliminating nuclear weapons could be solved by a simple vote for a blanket ban. We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that such approaches could change the existing strategic realities that nuclear-weapon States should be guided by. As for attempts to achieve nuclear disarmament without engaging States with nuclear-weapon capabilities and in defiance of their legitimate security interests, they are doomed to failure. That was clearly demonstrated by the conference held here last week.

We must all focus on preserving the NPT and implementing the decisions adopted at its review conferences. The main task of the new review cycle is to consolidate the efforts of the international community to ensure its efficiency. A balanced approach to the three pillars — nuclear non-proliferation, the peaceful use of atomic energy and nuclear disarmament — has been the foundation of NPT-related activities for many years. Issues related to a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are at the heart of the NPT review cycle agenda. Convening a conference on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) remains an urgent and achievable goal in the context of efforts to implement the 1995 NPT resolution on establishing a WMD-free zone in the Middle East. Russia is committed to making every possible effort to implement that resolution and to promote dialogue on that issue.

The issue of conventional weapons is also very important. First, we see a potential new conventional arms-control regime in Europe. Russia champions the elaboration of such a regime, adapted to the current military and political realities in the continent. Back in 2009, our country put forward a draft comprehensive treaty on European security. However, Russia's constructive proposal is still being ignored. We remain open to such dialogue on an equal basis and with due respect for the interests of all stakeholders. We are hopeful that discussions on all the issues that we have touched upon will enrich the UNDC's substantive work and be reflected in the draft working documents before this body.

Moreover, Russia is offering new constructive ideas to facilitate the revitalization of the work of the Commission. Last year in the UNDC, at the initiative of the Russian Federation, China and the United States, we launched discussions on the inclusion of a third item on transparency- and confidence-building measures and preventing an arms race in outer space.

The formulation is contained in the relevant working paper of last year's UNDC session (A/CN.10/2016/WP.1). The relevance of the topics on transparency- and confidence-building measures and the prevention of an arms race in outer space is obvious. The overwhelming majority of States are well aware that the threat of the weaponization of outer space is an objective reality, as confirmed by the vote on General Assembly resolutions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and transparency- and confidence-building measures in outer space activities, as well as by the repeated calls of the group of 21 member States at the Conference on Disarmament regarding the importance of launching substantive work on preventing an arms race in outer space.

These two issues are receiving increasing attention at regional forums as well. The inclusion of that topic in the UNDC agenda would fully correspond with the recommendation contained in the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (A/68/189). In presenting the initiative on transparency- and confidence-building measures and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, we are in many respects relying on our experience in the Conference on Disarmament, where in addition to the traditional agenda items, we are promoting compromise and the idea — potentially acceptable to all — of drafting an international convention on the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. We call on all States to give our initiative on the UNDC's third agenda item a closer look and to take an active part in relevant discussions with a view to including it in the forum's agenda for the next three-year cycle.

In connection with the statement made by the delegation of Ukraine, we wish to note the following. First and foremost, the statement made about the alleged military aggression by our country against Ukraine and the occupation of its territory is not based in reality. We recall in this regard that Crimea united with Russia through the free will of the Crimeans. In the referendum of March 2014, more than 96 per cent of the population of the then Autonomous Republic of Crimea, including the city of Sevastopol, made a deliberate choice. This exercise of the right to self-determination was the only opportunity to protect the vital interests of the people of Crimea, who faced the anti-constitutional overthrow of the State that occurred on 22 February. As a result, the leaders in Kyiv were replaced by force by ultranationalists, who continue to affect decision-making in the country. The allegations that there was Russian aggression against south-eastern Ukraine and that the Russian Government sent significant amounts of weapons to that region are also baseless. We feel that full responsibility for the situation in Donbas belongs to Kyiv. For a third month now, based on the weapon ban, Ukrainian nationalists have continued their economic blockade of portions of the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics.

In conclusion, I would like to urge my Ukrainian colleagues to focus on fulfilling their commitments under the Minsk agreements instead of spreading inaccurate information. This is more true than ever since Kyiv has continued to flagrantly violate the provisions of that document and is attempting to resolve the conflict in the Donbas by force and bring about the region's financial ruin.

Our country wants to maintain friendly relations with its neighbours in Ukraine. This kind of tension in central Europe benefits no one, as was once again pointed out by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, on 30 March, during the forum "Arctic: Territory of Dialogue" in Arkhangelsk.

Mr. Kim In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at this year's substantive session, as well as the other members of the Bureau. I wish you every success in your work, which entails great responsibility, and assure you of my delegation's full support and collaboration.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

I would like to state my country's general view on the work of the Disarmament Commission in my national capacity.

The Disarmament Commission, as the representative deliberative body in the field of disarmament, has an important role to play within the United Nations disarmament machinery. As all of us are aware, the Commission has been at a stalemate for 20 years in spite of the continuous efforts of all member States, including the members of the Non-Aligned

Movement, which seeks comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament.

Nuclear disarmament, which is a primary issue for guaranteeing peace and security in the world, can be said to be at a crossroads. New strategies and scenarios to achieve a strategic nuclear edge on the basis of nuclear modernization and global missile systems are being further strengthened with no effort made to disguise them. Global instability and the danger of nuclear war are increasing daily owing to the biggest nuclear-weapon State's reckless arms buildup and modernization. To cope with this, nuclear-weapon States are increasing their own strategic nuclear forces in quality and quantity. My delegation believes that we cannot expect any tangible results in nuclear disarmament so long as an anachronistic policy of hegemony to dominate the world by attaining a strategic nuclear edge is being pursued.

My delegation contends that comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament will be possible only when the United States, the biggest nuclear Power, gives up its nuclear threats and military actions aimed at bringing down sovereign States by force. The United States has the biggest stockpile of the latest nuclear weapons and is pushing forward the State strategy of dominating the world with them as its mainstay. Successive United States rulers have persistently resorted to attempts to monopolize nuclear weapons in order to dominate humankind under the deceptive signboard of nuclear disarmament and a world free from nuclear weapons.

The United States is relentlessly moving forward with its $1 billion project to modernize its nuclear weapons, which was promoted by the previous Administration under the motto of peace backed by force of arms. There have been statements calling for a repeal of treaties on the reduction of nuclear weapons signed with other big Powers. The United States, the biggest nuclear-weapon State, is a criminal State that inflicted the first nuclear disaster on humankind. Its undisguised ambition to achieve hegemony and its attempts to modernize its nuclear weapons can therefore only increase the danger of a nuclear war and a nuclear arms race on our planet.

The Korean peninsula has been turned into the world's most dangerous hot spot, where the possibility of a nuclear war is actually real. As the international community has witnessed every year, the situation on the Korean peninsula often spins out of control owing to the aggressive war exercises held one after another in and around the Korean peninsula by the United States, which will not abandon its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. At this very moment, the United States and South Korea are staging the largest-ever joint military drills, known as Key Resolve and Foal Eagle, on the Korean peninsula. Involved in the drills are huge forces of aggression, including the troops of the United States and South Korea and the forces of various vassal countries and all types of strategic assets, such as United States nuclear carriers, nuclear submarines and nuclear strategic bombers.

The United States has secretly introduced more than 6 million tons of ammunition and equipment into South Korea since the end of last year. It recently took measures for the urgent evacuation of families of United States troops present in South Korea and American citizens staying there ahead of the joint military drills. The four-dimension operation aimed at a pre-emptive nuclear attack on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is being concretely developed through nuclear war drills, and exercises targeting neighbouring countries are openly staged under the simulated conditions of the deployment of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system.

After kicking off joint military drills involving hundreds of thousands of troops and nuclear strategic assets, the United States is staging a special operation drill, the keynote of which is a beheading operation to eliminate the headquarters of a sovereign State and a pre-emptive strike operation designed to destroy its nuclear and rocket bases, which is clearly its ulterior motive.

The United States has worked hard to justify the war rehearsals, talking about their transparency and their annual and defensive nature aimed at addressing the access of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to nuclear weapons, but that is no more than a paradox. This is nothing but a cynical ploy to shift the responsibility for escalating tensions on the peninsula onto the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to justify its aggression. The United States is hell-bent on dangerous saber-rattling in South Korea. The arch criminal is disrupting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and the rest of North-East Asia close to the nuclear stockpiles.

A sovereign countries has a legitimate right to self-defence in order to maintain the high alert for action that is required in grave situations in which war may break out any moment, and to improve its ability to prevent war and its elimination by an aggressor.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea had no other choice but to resort to nuclear weapons. It has done everything possible to defend its national security from the consistent nuclear threats of the United States, which have continued since the 1950s. That is why we had no option but to strengthen our nuclear deterrence with all our heart and soul. This may not be easily understood by those countries that have never experienced the nuclear weapons of a hostile Power on their doorstep and in their air space. Peace has been preserved on the peninsula, despite the outrageous moves of the United States towards nuclear war, entirely thanks to the resolute will of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its efforts to protect peace, as well as its tremendous nuclear deterrence for self-defence.

Arming ourselves with nuclear weapons is the policy of our State. The access of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to nuclear weapons has markedly reduced the danger of a nuclear war on the Korean peninsula and replaced the era of nukes of aggression, in which the United States unilaterally posed a nuclear threat, with an era of nukes of justice. As long as there exists a nuclear-weapon State that is hostile towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, our national security and the peace on the Korean peninsula can be defended only with reliable nuclear deterrence. We will continue to build up our self-defence capability, the pivot of which is nuclear force and the capability of pre-emptive strike, as long as the United States and its vassal forces keep up their nuclear threat and blackmail and as long as they do not stop the war games they stage at our doorstep, disguising them as annual events.

My delegation would like to call the special attention of the Commission once again to attempts to infringe on our sovereignty and carry out regime change, including through undisguised nuclear threats, war exercises, sanctions and a blockade. In addition, with regard to the allegation of the South Korean delegation this morning that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear missile test is a provocation and a threat to the region and the world, our delegation tried to redact these remarks as a ridiculous distortion of reality and an attempt to mislead the world. South Korea — which, under the United States nuclear umbrella, allowed the deployment of nuclear weapons and joined the United States' hostile policy of nuclear threats to and blackmail of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for over half a century — has no legal or moral ground to talk about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's use of its nuclear deterrent in the exercise of its right to self-defence.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses its full support to the efforts of the Non-Aligned Movement to realize comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Kazi (Bangladesh): My delegation joins others in congratulating you, Madam, on your election as Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission at its 2017 substantive session. We also put on record our appreciation for the work done by your predecessor and the Chairs of the two Working Groups as part of the current triennial cycle.

Bangladesh hopes that our collective work in the current session will help break the impasse that has made tangible results from the Commission's work rather elusive over the past many years. We also hope that the progress and convergence achieved in the two Working Groups last year will help add further impetus to the work of this concluding session of the current triennial cycle.

Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

We thank the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for sharing his insights and for his dedicated service to the United Nations disarmament machinery.

Bangladesh reaffirms that the Disarmament Commission remains the sole, specialized deliberative body with universal membership to build and foster consensus on critical issues concerning general and complete disarmament, including nuclear disarmament.

The forward-looking pronouncements made at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament in 2013 make us believe that there may be sufficient political will to take forward the nuclear disarmament agenda, in parallel with the pursuit of nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, but what has perhaps been missing so far is the leadership and courage to translate that political will into demonstrable results and action. It

remains to be seen if the increasingly volatile security situation around the world can be motivation enough for reinvigorating the entire disarmament machinery, including the Disarmament Commission.

Bangladesh subscribes to the notion that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should be pursued with the same level of priority if we are to have a world free of nuclear weapons. The retention, deployment, modernization and proliferation of nuclear weapons continue to pose grave threats to the entire humankind and to the maintenance of international peace and security. The often artificial line drawn between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation continues to drive a wedge in our collective efforts to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a non-discriminatory, irreversible and verifiable manner.

Bangladesh therefore sees merit in the work on developing appropriate legal measures, provisions and norms through multilateral nuclear-disarmament negotiations. Accordingly, we reaffirm our support for initiating negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons, as envisaged by the General Assembly. We also emphasize the critical importance of convening a high-level disarmament conference no later than 2018 to take stock of the progress made and chart the way forward.

The growing sensitization of the international community to the humanitarian consequences of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons culminated in the adoption of General Assembly resolution 71/258 last year. The landmark resolution, which our delegation voted for, set the ground for convening the conference to negotiate an international legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons towards their total elimination. The general exchange of views in the first session of the conference last week should inform the first draft of the legally binding instrument, which, following intergovernmental negotiations, should pave the way for a treaty that would further strengthen and reinforce the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), particularly its article VI. Bangladesh will engage with the next NPT review cycle in a constructive manner and will look forward to reaching agreement at the 2020 review conference.

Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, non-nuclear-weapon States deserve legally binding assurance from nuclear-weapon States on refraining from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against them. That remains a priority consideration for Bangladesh in the context of the draft programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations overall.

We acknowledge the crucial role played by nuclear-weapon-free zones in advancing the negative security assurances agenda, as well as the twin objectives of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We underscore the importance of adhering to the bold vision set out in this regard in the programme of action adopted at the the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and of pursuing and implementing the agreement reached in the 2010 NPT Review Conference in particular.

Bangladesh supports the commencement of negotiations in the CD on a fissile material cut-off treaty for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, pursuant to the mandate contained in document CD/1299. We participated in the informal consultations convened by the Chair of the Expert Preparatory Group in February 2017 and look forward to the outcome of its work. We have consistently supported the commencement of negotiations on an international treaty on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, including on the basis of the draft text submitted by the Russian Federation and China.

Bangladesh strongly believes in compliance with the essential safety, safeguard and security measures in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy, including for accelerated development in developing and least-developed countries. In our national capacity, we shall continue to further deepen our cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other relevant international partners in building our capacity for such compliance.

With regard to conventional weapons, Bangladesh closely follows and participates in the work concerning the Arms Trade Treaty. Our political leadership remains positively disposed towards possible ratification of the Treaty following our signature in 2013. We are currently looking into possible means to enhance our capacity for compliance with the Treaty provisions, including under the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Bangladesh will continue to participate in the existing

confidence-building and transparency measures in the field of conventional weapons.

We appreciate the international community's enhanced attention to preventing the illicit transfer of arms, and its interface with terrorism and other transnational organized crimes. We remain concerned about the growing use of improvised explosive devices targeting civilians and United Nations peacekeepers, among others, and recognize the priority attached to addressing threats posed by improvised explosive devices on the occasion of the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action this year. We underscore the need for increased support for developing and least developed countries, including those contributing troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations, to build the capacity of their concerned agencies to counter threats posed by improvised explosive devices.

Bangladesh remains generally supportive of considering a possible third agenda item, particularly one concerning an emerging issue of concern for the maintenance of international peace and security. Such consideration should not, however, deflect attention or focus from the priority attached to the objectives of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

In conclusion, Bangladesh remains committed to the potential of the Commission and looks forward to supporting the efforts of the Chair to uphold its relevance by further enhancing the breadth and quality of its substantive outcomes.

Mrs. Lal (India): Unfortunately, Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill, our Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, could not join us today. I will read out the statement on his behalf.

> "At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam, and the other members of the Bureau on your stewardship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) session this year. Let me assure you of the full support of my delegation in the discharge of your responsibilities. I would place on record our appreciation for the work done by the UNDC Chairs of the past two years, as well as the Chairs of the two Working Groups. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Kim Won-soo for his contribution to this important and challenging task and for his presence at the meeting earlier today.
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> "We also express and extend our condolences and empathy to the people of the Russian Federation for the tragic attacks in Saint Petersburg.
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> "India associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).
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> "India attaches great importance to the UNDC, the deliberative leg of the triad of disarmament machinery put in place by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. The Commission plays a unique role as the only forum with universal membership for in-depth deliberations on relevant disarmament issues. At a time of growing mistrust and rising international tensions, as well as numerous challenges to both the disarmament agenda and the disarmament machinery, the role of the Commission, as a platform for dialogue and cooperation assumes even greater significance. The UNDC offers an opportunity for member States to collectively make progress on significant disarmament issues by infusing coherence and consensus in the disarmament debate, which is an imperative if we are to effectively address the complex security challenges of our times.
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> "While we share the disappointment at the UNDC's inability to adopt substantive recommendations since 1999, we continue to believe in the forum's inherent value. It behooves us member States to show greater political commitment to multilateral forums and to invest in multilateral outcomes that will be of enduring value to the entire international community. Actions must match words, and rhetoric should accord with responsible behaviour. By adopting concrete recommendations by consensus to the General Assembly this year, let us demonstrate our renewed commitment to resolution 69/77, which called for revitalizing the work of the UNDC in this new triennial cycle.
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> "India attaches the highest priority to global, non-discriminatory, verifiable nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a time-bound manner. As such, India has supported the proposal put forward by the Non-Aligned Movement for the CD to commence negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-weapon convention.

Without prejudice to the priority attached to nuclear disarmament, India has also supported the commencement of negotiations of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the CD on the basis of the agreed mandate. We have called for meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons in order to build trust and confidence and to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in international affairs and security doctrines.

"India's resolutions in the First Committee on the convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and on reducing nuclear dangers, which received support from a large number of member States, reflect that approach. India's resolution on measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, adopted by consensus by the General Assembly since 2002, gives expression to widely held international concerns about terrorism and the illicit trafficking of weapons-of-mass-destruction technologies, which affect international security in ways that continue to reverberate throughout the world.

"With regard to a second agenda item, practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, India supports practical confidence-building measures initiatives, as we believe that they can go a long way towards enhancing transparency and minimizing misunderstanding and misperceptions, therefore promoting a suitable environment of peace and security among States. Confidence-building must be a step-by-step process and should evolve at a pace comfortable to all participating States. The initiation and adoption of confidence-building measures must remain the prerogative of States concerned and subject to their consent. In elaborating practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, we could benefit from and build upon the guidelines and confidence-building measures endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-first session on the recommendation of the UNDC.

"As we conclude another triennial cycle, this year's session assumes special significance in terms of achieving a successful outcome through the adoption of substantive and concrete recommendations, breaking the long-standing impasse and thereby laying a firm foundation for future progress. In that endeavour, the Commission can rest assured of India's full support and cooperation."

The Chair: We have heard the last speaker on the list for this afternoon.

I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in the exercise of the right of reply. I remind delegations that the number of interventions in the exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting is limited to two and that the first intervention should be limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to five.

Mr. Starinsky (Israel): We are taking the floor briefly to reply to the statements made by the representatives of Iran and Syria. We will not delve too deeply into those absurdities as they do not warrant serious consideration. We should not expect to hear the truth from States that have repeatedly violated their international obligations and have shown that they see no merit in sticking to the truth and facts.

These countries have violated their commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and are cooperating in the commission of war crimes against the Syrian people, including through the use of chemical weapons. The Syrian regime is using chemical weapons against its own people; its declaration to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is full of gaps, discrepancies and inconsistencies. Iran is the world's leading exporting State of terror, extremism and instability. I could go on and on, but that in itself shows the level of seriousness we should accord to any of their statements.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I am taking the floor to invoke my delegation's right of reply to the delusional comments made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

North Korea's United Nations-proscribed weapons programmes represent a clear, grave threat to international peace and security. The United States strongly condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear and ballistic-missile tests, which violate multiple Security Council resolutions explicitly prohibiting these activities and any further developments to their proscribed programmes.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's provocative actions serve only to increase the international community's resolve to counter the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's prohibited

weapons-of-mass-destruction programmes. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to refrain from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric that threaten international peace and stability, and to make a strategic choice to fulfil its international obligations and commitments and return to serious talks.

We have consistently made clear that we will not accept North Korea as a nuclear State. We call on all States to use every available channel and means of influence to make clear to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its enablers that further provocation is unacceptable, and take steps to show that there are consequences to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unlawful conduct. Our commitment to the defence of our allies, including the Republic of Korea and Japan, in the face of these threats is ironclad. We remain prepared and will continue to take steps to increase our readiness to defend ourselves and our allies from attack, and we are willing to use the full range of capabilities at our disposal against this growing threat.

Mr. Hahn Choonghee (Republic of Korea): It is regrettable that I must use the right of reply, but I am compelled to do so, as the argument of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea may mislead the international community.

First of all, whatever means North Korea uses to try to defend its position will not and cannot change the nature of the North Korean nuclear and missile-development programme. Numerous and consistent resolutions have been adopted by the Security Council, beginning in 2006, a decade ago, when North Korea conducted its first long-range missile and nuclear test. There are now a total of seven major Security Council resolutions, including the two most serious and robust ones adopted last year, resolutions 2270 (2016) and 2321 (2016).

The views and the voices of the international community on this issue are clear, unequivocal and plain. Last year and this, in particular, the Security Council issued a total of 14 press statements on top of the two Security Council resolutions, which strongly condemned North Korean provocation. North Korea, however, responded last year with two nuclear tests and 24 missile launches, and this year with six launches. I can say without hesitation that North Korea's attitude and behaviour not only represent its non-respect or non-observance of the relevant resolutions; they seem to be ridiculing the sincerity and the resolve of the international community, as well as the integrity of the Security Council.

North Korea continuously argues that it has been developing nuclear weapons to protect its system and regime against threat from outside. However, there is no hostility toward North Korea. No one is threatening North Korea. There is no reason to do that. The Republic of Korea and the United States have made clear on many occasions that the two countries remain open to credible and genuine talks on the denuclearization of North Korea.

In the same vein, the Republic of Korea-United States joint military exercises have been conducted annually for several decades to respond to the very clear and present military threat from North Korea, and are clearly defensive in nature. These exercises have been conducted in a very transparent manner as well, under the observation of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission.

It is North Korea, not any other country in the world, that makes the peace and security situation on the Korean peninsula unstable and dangerous. Furthermore, North Korea should realize that no country or any international organization will recognize North Korea as a nuclear State. If it continues to provoke and to be adamant with respect to its nuclear capability, it will face further isolation and much stronger reactions and tougher measures from the Security Council. I strongly urge North Korea to make a strategic decision to turn back from its nuclear-missile development programme before it is too late, and I hope that it will.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): In a previous meeting, I mentioned that I might exercise my right of reply. When the representatives of the Israeli entity find their position to be weak, they manipulate and distort the facts with a view to minimizing their responsibility for the aggression and crimes committed by the Israeli entity. It is well known worldwide that the largest weapons dealers in the world, particularly in terms of illicit trafficking, are mostly retired Israeli officers who work for the Israeli military industry.

The Israeli entity has relied for decades on so-called weapons diplomacy. It is clear to all how Israeli weaponry has fomented crises such as those in the Caucasus and elsewhere. Israel is involved in the illicit trade in all types of weapons throughout the world, collaborating and colluding with separatist movements

and criminal organizations everywhere. The Israeli entity has even formed criminal organizations for the purposes of trading in human organs, particularly those of children.

There is international unanimity that the real danger in the Middle East region is Israel's nuclear weapons. The Israeli entity possesses all types of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons as well as their means of delivery. These weapons can enable them to reach distant targets well beyond the Middle East region. Israel is the only entity in the region to possess such weapons.

Israel has also transported toxic chemical materials to terrorist groups in Syria. We previously reported such information and indicated the quantities and locations where these materials have been stored. We are awaiting further action by the Security Council on the issue. In addition, Israel trains and finances armed terrorist groups, particularly the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and the Al-Nusra Front, and provides them with weapons and munitions in flagrant violation of all international resolutions and instruments on fighting terrorism.

Mr. Robatjazi (Islamic Republic of Iran): As I said in my right of reply in this morning's meeting (see A/CN.10/PV.362), the representative and officials of the Israeli regime are used to telling lies and making unfounded allegations about Iran, and we do not expect that regime to accept reality. What I said this morning was completely reality-based. I just want to go through some of the main points and compare them to reality and the data that shows what reality is.

First, Israel's history is full of aggression, occupation, genocide and atrocities against its neighbours and other countries of the Middle East. That is the simple reality and it is based on history. I recommend that the Israeli representative just take a look at the history books, United Nations documents and Security Council resolutions. Some 86 Security Council resolutions have been adopted as a result of Israel's acts of aggression, occupation and atrocities against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples and other countries of the region.

The second reality is that Israel is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons or to any other treaty governing weapons of mass destruction. Israel possesses nuclear weapons, which is why 120 States of the Non-Aligned Movement and many other States have expressed great concern regarding Israel's nuclear-weapon programme, which poses a serious and continuing threat to the security of neighbouring and other States, and have condemned Israel for having such a programme. It is not just Iran, but the international community itself, that believes as much, because it is a matter of reality.

The third reality is that a regime with such a history cannot be trusted when it has nuclear weapons. Such a regime poses a most serious threat to international security.

The last reality, to which I also referred in my statement this morning, is that this regime has no respect for international law and international rules. It has arrogantly and flagrantly disregarded all 86 Security Council resolutions that have been adopted, despite the fact that it is the international community that is calling on Israel to abide by them.

Israel's representatives at the United Nations have clearly ridiculed the Organization and its Member States in their statements. A clear example of such behaviour was the Israeli representative's statement at the time of the adoption of the Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), in December 2016.

These are the realities. They are not allegations and lies. They are based on reality, and Israel cannot escape them.

Mr. Leshchenko (Ukraine): I would like to exercise my right of reply to the statement made by the representative of the Russian Federation.

The Ukrainian delegation stands by its statement delivered earlier today (see A/CN.10/PV.362) and would like to underline that the conflict in certain areas of the eastern regions of Ukraine was caused by the Russian aggression against Ukraine that started with the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, together with the so-called referendum that was undertaken with the total support of the Russian military forces. The referendum, by the way, was not recognized by the international community.

We are fully committed to the implementation of the Minsk agreements mentioned by the representative of the Russian delegation. However, uncontrolled sections of Ukraine's State border with Russia remain one of the key sources of escalation on the ground because of the influx of illegal supplies of arms, military equipment and military personnel from the east. If Russia ended

its military support for its proxies in our territory, the conflict in the Donbas region could be settled peacefully very soon without any external assistance.

Mr. Kim In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to the remarks of the representatives of the United States and South Korea.

The United States and South Korea condemned the self-defence measures of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on nuclear and ballistic-rocket development as a so-called threat and provocation that endanger world peace. My delegation totally rejects the remark as a ridiculous argument and a distortion of reality.

It rings true to many people that the Korean peninsula issue is in a vicious cycle of nuclear and rocket tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with the world's aggravating attention and sanctions triggering new rounds of nuclear and rocket tests by my country. However, people fail to see — or simply turn away from, sometimes for years — the reality that each link of the cycle is directly connected to the hostile policy of the United States and a consequence of its nuclear threat directed at the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United States nuclear threat against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a form of blackmail that is neither a temporary, recent annoyance nor a fictional concept. It is an actual concrete threat that the United States has imposed on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the past decades because it is United States policy to protect the option of a pre-emptive nuclear strike on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United States once plotted a nuclear strike on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea early in 1950, and it has deployed a large number of nuclear weapons in South Korea since then. Since the late 1960s, it has conducted joint military drills with South Korea in which they practice deploying these weapons. These annual United States-South Korea joint nuclear exercises have continued for more than 40 years.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has made the most strenuous efforts to eliminate the United States nuclear threat. To this end, it has tried dialogue and negotiations for the establishment of a denuclearized zone and relied on international law. Despite these efforts, the United States has not withdrawn its nuclear threat against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Instead, it has gone so far as to, in 2002, officially designate the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a target for its nuclear pre-emptive strikes.

Given the fact that neither dialogue nor international law has helped to efface the world's biggest nuclear threat posed by the world's biggest nuclear Power, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been left with no other choice but to resort to nuclear means to cope with it. In these gravest of circumstances, with the United States on a rampage against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea while it upgrades its nuclear weaponry, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been forced to accelerate the development of its own nuclear weapons in order to defend its social system and national security.

As far as the allegations of the South Korean delegation are concerned, I do not think it is worth repeating my delegation's position, but I would like to take this opportunity to emphasize South Korea's wanton violations of the sovereignty and unity of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in calling our defensive measures provocations, a challenge and a threat. The more South Korea dedicates itself to distorting reality and misleading the world, the more clearly and undeniably the United States, through its cooperation, is responsible for aggravating the situation on the Korean peninsula. In fact, the peace and security of the Korean peninsula, and the world in general, are being reliably defended by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea thanks to its policy of self-defence through nuclear deterrence.

Once again, I would like to repeat that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's unwavering position is to continuously bolster its self-defence military capability, the pivot of which is the force of the nuclear pre-emptive attack capability, unless the United States and South Korea give up their ambitious war operations, evidenced by the military drills taking place at the doorstep of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea every year.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): With regard to the statement by the representative of Ukraine, we repudiate his allegation that the 2014 referendum was linked to the presence of Russian armed forces. It is true that at the time of the

referendum the peninsula was host to Russian forces, but our forces were there on a fully legal basis in accordance with the then-existing agreements between Ukraine and the Russian Federation on the residency of the Black Sea fleet. Furthermore, the Russian armed forces personnel were much smaller in number than was provided for under the quota in the agreements. But the Russian soldiers did not take any part in organizing the referendum, and not one international observer or member of the press noted that fact.

With regard to the implementation of the Minsk agreements, if the Ukrainian delegation was truly committed to carrying out these agreements and the Security Council's resolutions, including resolution 2202 (2015), the conflict in the eastern part of Ukraine would have ended long ago. Two years have elapsed since the Presidents of Russia, France and Ukraine and the Chancellor of Germany signed off on the Minsk agreements, but no political, economic or humanitarian obligation has been carried out by Ukraine. No amnesty has been declared. No exchange of prisoners of war has taken place. No laws on the special status of specific territories in the eastern portion of Ukraine have been put into place. The Constitution of the country has not been changed. The election laws have not been prepared and, of course, no elections have taken place. If the Ukrainian delegation is truly interested in a solution to the conflict in its own backyard, it really should switch from words to actions.

Mr. Hahn Choonghee (Republic of Korea): I apologize for taking the floor again. First of all, North Korea must heed the unanimous adoption of the most recent sanctions resolution by the Security Council (resolution 2321 (2016)). The international community has made clear that it will no longer sit back and watch North Korea's contempt and disregard for international rules and norms.

North Korea is turning a deaf ear to the international community's repeated warnings and shows no signs of stopping its flagrant violations of international rules and norms. On the contrary, it keeps busy by casting groundless aspersions on the Security Council and the international community while continuing to threaten international peace and security. North Korea should realize that its total rejection of Security Council resolutions, which have been adopted unanimously, including with the support of all five permanent members, tells the international community that North Korea rejects the authority of the Security Council, which is the world's primary and most important organ for defending international peace and security.

When North Korea joined the United Nations in 1991, it agreed to abide by all Security Council resolutions. I would like to ask North Korea whether it thinks that Council members, who adopted the last seven relevant resolutions unanimously, made a mistaken, unreasonable decision. I firmly believe that Council members individually and independently reviewed all the information and circumstances regarding the North Korean provocation and made a very sober and sovereign judgement that North Korea's nuclear-weapon programme is unjustifiable and unacceptable, deserves strong condemnation and should be stopped without delay. We therefore call on North Korea to immediately fully, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle its programme of weapons of mass destruction, in accordance with the relevant international norms. The Republic of Korea will continue to work with the international community to dismantle North Korea's nuclear and missile programme.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I will be brief, given the late hour. I just wanted to take the floor one last time in response to the remarks made by the representative of North Korea. I urge the North Koreans once again to refrain from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric that threaten international peace and security and to make the strategic choice to fulfil their international obligations and commitments and return to serious talks.

Mr. Kim In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Once again, I reject the allegations made by the representatives of the United States and South Korea. I wish to make a brief comment to some States with regard to the United Nations sanction resolution.

As I have said before, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea had no choice but to go nuclear in order to protect its sovereignty and dignity. There is a consistent nuclear threat from the United States. Although reality shows that it was the United States that compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to go nuclear, the Security Council declared the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ongoing nuclear- and ballistic-missile-related activity to be a clear threat to international peace and security, even adopting the so-called sanctions resolution (resolution 2321 (2016)), which was recently concocted against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

As for the resolution's legal basis, there is no provision either in the Charter of the United Nations or any other international code that says that nuclear and ballistic-rocket activity poses a threat to international peace and security. The countries that carried out such activities before the Democratic People's Republic of Korea did have never been called into question by the Security Council. One can therefore only ask on what grounds and with what authority the Council adopted a resolution prohibiting nuclear and ballistic-rocket activities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United States has no moral right to force the States Members of the United Nations to implement such unfair and unjust resolutions, and Member States have no moral obligation to implement them.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.364

General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

364th meeting

Tuesday, 4 April 2017, 10 a.m.

New York

Chair: Ms. Martinic ..... (Argentina)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): This morning the Commission will continue with the list of speakers for the general debate. I would urge those delegations that have not yet done so to inscribe themselves on the list as soon as possible.

In order to maximize the time available to us during the general exchange of views segment, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor. I would also like to remind all delegations that are already inscribed on the list to keep in mind that a rolling list implies that they should be prepared to take the floor at any time, possibly sooner than they had originally planned.

I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the length of statements, that is, 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of the groups and 10 minutes when making statements in their national capacity.

Ms. Bebbington (United Kingdom): I would like to start by congratulating you on your chairmanship, Madam Chair, and by assuring you of the full support of the United Kingdom delegation.

The United Kingdom is committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and we recognize our obligations under all three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We have a strong record on nuclear disarmament. We have reduced our own nuclear forces by more than half since the height of the Cold War. We hold only around 1 per cent of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons. We initiated the permanent-five process to bring together the nuclear-weapon States in order to build the confidence and transparency needed to help develop the conditions that would enable disarmament. We have led the way on disarmament verification.

We recognize the frustration that exists at the perceived slow progress on nuclear disarmament. However, there are no shortcuts on the road to a world without nuclear weapons. We do not believe the negotiations on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons will lead to effective progress on nuclear disarmament. The United Kingdom firmly believes that the best way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons is through gradual multilateral disarmament, negotiated using a step-by-step approach and within existing frameworks. Global disarmament requires a step-by-step approach to build trust and confidence. It will provide for tangible steps towards a safer and more stable world where countries with nuclear weapons feel able to relinquish them.

The United Kingdom will continue to press for key steps towards multilateral disarmament, including the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We welcome its ratification by Burma and Swaziland during the past year. We fully support efforts to develop and sustain the verification system for the Treaty.

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The United Kingdom will continue to work for successful negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. The United Kingdom has had a voluntary moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices since 1995. We will work constructively in the high-level expert preparatory group on a fissile-material cut-off treaty, established pursuant to resolution 71/259 — sponsored by Canada — to explore ways to make further progress.

The United Kingdom was pleased to co-sponsor resolution 71/267, on nuclear disarmament verification, sponsored by Norway. We will respond positively to the Secretary-General's call for views to help discussions by the Group of Governmental Experts in 2018 and 2019. We hope we will all take that opportunity. We will continue our work with allies on how we meet the challenges of verification.

The United Kingdom believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute greatly to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to enhancing regional and international security. We remain committed to signing the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as soon as possible and to the objective of achieving a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The United Kingdom strongly condemns North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile tests, which are in clear violation of multiple Security Council resolutions and continue to threaten international peace and security. We urge North Korea to re-engage with the international community and to take credible, concrete steps to prioritize the well-being of its own people instead of the illegal pursuit of its nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes. The United Kingdom has engaged directly with North Korea to condemn its actions and continues to engage with a range of partners on appropriate multilateral responses.

The United Kingdom remains absolutely committed to rigorous implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed on between the E3+3 and Iran.

The United Kingdom's contribution to building the conditions for our shared aim of a goal of a world without nuclear weapons is, and will continue to be, strong. We are also concerned about the threat to global security through the illicit proliferation and use of conventional weapons.

The United Kingdom is committed to playing a leading role in international efforts on conventional arms control across the full range of issues and in support of the numerous instruments and arrangements designed to deliver greater global security. We are pleased to act as President of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects in 2017 and as a member of the Committee on Cooperative Compliance under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Transparency in the field of conventional arms is an important endeavour. Our commitment to annual reporting to the Arms Trade Treaty, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions is a testament to that. The universalization of all those instruments would be a substantial step forward in building confidence in the field of conventional arms. We call on all States that are not signatories to, or participating in, such instruments to make ratification or accession a national priority.

The United Kingdom gives priority to the development and operation of the Arms Trade Treaty. What is needed now is delivery against the Treaty's objectives and priorities, particularly understanding and tackling the challenges of universalization and effective implementation. We look forward to furthering that important work at the third Conference of States Parties, to be heldlater this year. We offer Ambassador Korhonen of Finland our full support in his leadership of that process.

We will continue to provide assistance, where possible, to those looking to join and implement the Treaty. This year, the United Kingdom provided £311,000 to the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund to assist States parties to implement the Treaty. The existing overarching framework of conventional arms control and confidence-building measures — for example, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna Document 1990 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures Convened in Accordance with the

Relevant Provisions of the Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe — include many effective elements that we should preserve and, where necessary, update to make them fit for purpose in the context of the evolving international security landscape. In particular, a renewed effort is needed to increase transparency and build confidence in order to reduce the risk of an unintended escalation of tensions or military accidents. We continue to support our partners in their efforts to review those initiatives.

We must not underestimate the threats posed by small arms and light weapons — the single most significant contributor to conflicts, violence and crime — and in particular the effects wreaked by their illicit trade. The diversion of legal transfers of small arms and light weapons continues to pose a threat to peace and security, undermines human security and exacerbates the illicit trade in wildlife. We must turn those negative impacts into positive action towards building peaceful and stable societies. We look forward to the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We offer Ambassador Ramis of France our full support in her chairmanship. The United Kingdom continues to provide assistance for capacity-building in the priority area of stockpile management, including surplus disposal through destruction and ensuring better regulated exports. In 2016, we provided over £1.6 million for small arms and light weapons control in sub-Saharan Africa.

The United Kingdom is fully committed to achieving the goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, including their globalization. We remain committed to clearing the Falkland Islands of anti-personnel mines, in line with our obligation under article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Phase 5 of the demining of the Falkland Islands began in October 2016 and builds on four previous phases of demining that were completed between 2009 and 2016, clearing more than 35 minefields.

While fulfilling its own obligations under those conventions, the United Kingdom also spends over £10 million per year through its Global Mine Action Programme on clearance of explosive remnants of war, survey, risk education and capacity-building. It is currently operating in Burma, Somalia, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Sri Lanka. The Programme has delivered good results, including 21 million square metres of land cleared and released for productive use by communities.

We look forward to constructive engagement in the Commission's working groups. The United Kingdom believes that it is in the interest of all for the Disarmament Commission to demonstrate that it can reach agreement on priority issues and move the agenda forward. It was disappointing that last year we were unable to agree on establishing a third working group to consider the implementation of transparency- and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. We hope that this year we can finalize the conventional weapons paper in Working Group II, thereby freeing up the agenda for other issues to be considered at next year's meeting. We therefore call on Member States to avoid linkages between the two working groups and to engage in a meaningful way on that important agenda.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming the United Kingdom's support for the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt): At the outset, let me express our sincere condolences to the Russian delegation on the sad occasion of the terrorist attack in Saint Petersburg yesterday.

I would like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election to chair this year's substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and to express our appreciation for all your efforts thus far. You have our full support and backing. Likewise, I would like to extend our congratulations to other members of the Bureau on their election, as well as to commend Venezuela and Bulgaria for chairing the two UNDC working groups.

I would like to associate my delegation with the joint statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of Arab States and the Group of African States (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

This year is particularly important for the UNDC, as it comes after the unprecedented momentum in the light of the historic first session of the United Nations

conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, which took place last week. In our view, that objective is chiefly dependent upon the instrument's implementation by the nuclear-weapon States, in accordance with their legal obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the achievement of universal adherence to the Treaty.

Seeking a substantive outcome this year is important if we are to preserve the relevance of the UNDC as a key component of the multilateral disarmament machinery, as the Commission has consistently failed to adopt any recommendations since 1999. We call on the nuclear-weapon States and major arms exporters to display the necessary political will to reach a substantive outcome on the two important issues on the Commission's agenda, so as to enable it to advance the cause of disarmament.

Let me begin with the UNDC agenda item entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". The starting point in that regard should be the implementation of resolution 69/58, on the follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, held on 26 September of that year. The resolution continues to chart a road map towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, with another high-level meeting to be held in New York next year. The UNDC should be ready to contribute to the deliberations on the implementation of that road map, especially with regard to the elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction globally, verifiably and without exception.

The universalization of the NPT is an indispensable step to achieving general and comprehensive nuclear disarmament. The speedy establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones across the world lends motivation to efforts aimed at achieving the wider objective of a world free of nuclear weapons and Global Zero. The international community has recognized the urgency of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Yet, despite those repeated calls and the overwhelming global support for the establishment of such a zone, the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, an integral and essential part of the package of decisions that enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, has yet to be implemented. The resolution remains valid until its objectives are achieved and hence should be implemented without further delay. The UNDC provides a timely opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the international community to put the process back on track. It provides an adequate forum to reflect on how to break the current stalemate and to restore the credibility and sustainability of the NPT as a cornerstone treaty. The NPT review cycles will resume next month in Vienna.

UNDC deliberations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons are taking on growing importance. By contributing to the debate on confidence-building measures, the UNDC will help to address areas of concern relating to conventional weapons, including the outstanding issue of illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We need to build upon the constructive deliberations we held in Working Group II in 2015 and 2016.

We have consistently called for the following elements as integral components of any possible confidence-building measures: first, subjecting overproduction and ever-increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons in the hands of major arms exporters and producers to international inspection; secondly, mutual international accountability as the only guarantee against potential abuse of the existing imbalance between major arms producers and the rest of the world; and, thirdly, addressing protracted threats to international peace and security.

In that regard, there is no more profound threat to peace and stability, to international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and to the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations itself than the crimes of aggression and foreign occupation, which employ conventional arms arsenals to threaten and dominate peoples and deny them their most basic human rights.

By developing such confidence-building measures, the UNDC would refine the traditional meaning of the term, thereby contributing conceptually to enhancing international peace, security and stability. Furthermore, we welcome the consensual outcome document of sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms

and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In addition, we look forward to a successful review conference next year in that regard, under the current French presidency.

Egypt fully supports the UNDC process as an integral component of the disarmament machinery established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978. We stand ready to contribute constructively to the deliberations in order to ensure a positive outcome of the two working groups concurrently — one that reflects a considerable balance among the interests of all States. We are confident, Madam Chair, in your ability to steer our discussions towards a successful outcome to this cycle.

Mr. Ngundze (South Africa): On behalf of my delegation, let me join others in expressing our heartfelt condolences to the Russian Federation for the unfortunate incident that happened yesterday.

At the outset, I would liek to join other delegations in congratulating you, Madam Chair, on assuming your position as leader of this substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. South Africa also wishes to express its sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Tevi of Vanuatu, for his tireless work as Chair of the 2016 substantive session. We also congratulate the Working Group Chairs on their elections. My delegation looks forward to working with them to make this session a success.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered previously by the representatives of Indonesia and Cameroon on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

I would like to make a few general remarks in my national capacity on the two agenda items before us, which my delegation looks forward to discussing in detail during the thematic debates.

South Africa remains committed to multilateralism as the best tool to deal with issues affecting international peace and security. In that regard, it is South Africa's considered view that the Disarmament Commission provides an inclusive platform for deliberations on the critical issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The Commission has in the past made valuable contributions to our work in the field of disarmament and international security. We call on all delegations to show the necessary flexibility to allow this body to fulfil its responsibilities.

The fact that the Disarmament Commission has not made any progress since 1999 has become a growing concern. It is my delegation's hope that the discussions and deliberations during the next two weeks will be based on genuine political will and good faith, and that we will be able to make progress.

On the issue of nuclear disarmament, my delegation joins the majority of member States that have expressed deep concerns about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would befall humankind in case of a nuclear detonation, whether by design or accident. Only the total elimination of nuclear weapons and a legally binding assurance that they will never be produced again will guarantee a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons. In that connection, my delegation welcomes, as a bold and positive step, the convening of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, which began on 27 March.

My delegation is very pleased that the first session of the conference was a huge success and that it offered participating States an opportunity to exchange views on the main elements of the prohibition instrument, as mandated by resolution 71/258. While there was significant convergence among participating States on the key elements of such an instrument, we recognize that much remains to be done to finalize our work during the June and July session. We look forward to working with the President of the conference and all Member States to ensure that it reaches a successful outcome.

My delegation wishes to reiterate that our support for a prohibition treaty is without prejudice to the fulfilment of existing nuclear-disarmament commitments, in particular those agreed to in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As we approach the next NPT review cycle, it is imperative to recognize that the vitality and relevance of the Treaty, as the foundation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, is dependent on the extent to which State parties implement their obligations and commitments. It is not acceptable for State parties to treat their obligations and commitments as an à la carte menu from which they can choose. We call upon all States parties to the NPT to honour their obligations and to faithfully and without preconditions

implement all the commitments agreed to in 1995, 2000 and 2010 without any further delay, including the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to conventional weapons, South Africa, as a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, will play its part in the journey towards a world free of both anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. We encourage States that have not yet done so, in particular those possessing such weapons, to join those instruments without delay. We call on States that are in a position to do so to assist States that request assistance in their national implementation efforts, at their request, and to provide assistance to the victims of those weapons.

My delegation expresses deep concern about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which continues to contribute to the fuelling of conflicts, particularly in Africa. In that regard, South Africa will continue to advocate for the United Nations to invest more resources in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. South Africa will also continue to call on all Member States to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, as the only international legally binding instrument that promotes transparency and cooperation and sets clear norms and criteria that States should adhere to when considering arms transfers, thereby preventing the illicit trade in conventional weapons.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to elaborating further on the two agenda items under discussion during the thematic debates and stands ready to participate actively during discussions and to work with all delegations towards achieving a consensus outcome during the session.

Mr. Amiya (Japan): Before making my statement, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack in Saint Petersburg yesterday. My country expresses its solidarity with the injured and all of the people in the Russian Federation.

At the outset, I would also like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I would also like to congratulate the newly elected members of the Bureau. I assure you and the Bureau of members of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the carrying out of your important tasks.

The UNDC has remained in deadlock for about 17 years, although it was once renowned as the leading deliberative United Nations body in the field of disarmament. Japan will continue to actively participate in the UNDC. However, all of us here should be aware that the lack of substantive outcomes in this body has put its raison d'être into serious question, and we should work together to find a way to reinvigorate it.

The recent developments in nuclear disarmament deliberations make us seriously concerned that the rift between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States seems to have widened. Japan has consistently maintained that, as the major stakeholders, the engagement of the nuclear-weapon States is imperative in nuclear-disarmament deliberations in order to carry out effective disarmament measures.

Japan ascribes importance to the following measures, among others, as practical and concrete measures: first, enhancing transparency; secondly, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); thirdly, the early commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and, fourthly, the development of nuclear-disarmament verification measures.

With regard to the CTBT, as co-coordinator for facilitating the Treaty's entry into force, Japan will continue to work to facilitate its early entry into force and to strongly call for its early ratification by the remaining annex 2 States. Pending the Treaty's entry into force, the full moratorium on nuclear testing must be maintained.

The early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty is vital to the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons. The adoption of resolution 71/259 on such a treaty by an overwhelming majority of States during the present session of the General Assembly reflects broad international recognition of its importance. Japan welcomes the establishment of a high-level expert preparatory group on the topic and will actively contribute to its discussions.

As the only country ever to have suffered atomic bombings in wartime, we are of the view that nuclear disarmament must be promoted based on two understandings, namely, a clear understanding of the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons and an objective assessment of the reality of the security situation.

Despite the repeated calls by the international community, North Korea conducted two nuclear tests last year. In addition, last year alone, North Korea launched more than 20 ballistic missiles, including submarine-launched ballistic missiles. In 2017, North Korea has already launched ballistic missiles three times, including those that landed within Japan's exclusive economic zone. The series of nuclear tests and launches of ballistic missiles have raised the threat posed by North Korea to a new level. Furthermore, they represent a serious challenge to the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Therefore, Japan condemns North Korea in the strongest terms and urges it to immediately comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and other commitments. All Member States have an obligation to strictly and fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2270 (2016) and 2321 (2016).

The NPT remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is imperative to maintain and strengthen that regime. To that end, it is vital to achieve a meaningful outcome at the 2020 NPT Review Conference. Japan will make its utmost effort to that end through the 2020 NPT review process, starting this year. As a member of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), Japan will continue to strengthen cooperation with other States and groups of States.

The issue of the illicit trade in, and proliferation of, small arms and light weapons continues to pose a major threat to international peace and security. Japan stresses the importance of the continuous operation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and calls upon all Member States to provide data and information for those reporting frameworks.

Effectively implementing the Arms Trade Treaty and promoting its universalization are major challenges. Japan will actively work with other Member States and civil society to achieve the effective implementation of the Treaty. Rapid progress in science and industrial technology has led to great challenges in the field of conventional arms. Japan welcomes the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and will actively participate in the discussions.

Last but not least, it is time for us to work together to produce a constructive outcome in order to make a positive impact on the United Nations disarmament machinery. Japan will endeavour to ensure that this final year of the current triennial cycle leads to a positive outcome.

Mr. Pilven (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to convey our condolences to, and express my delegation's solidarity with, the Russian Federation, which was struck again yesterday by a heinous terrorist attack.

I would also like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election as Chair of the third session of this cycle of the Disarmament Commission, which I hope will be positive, constructive and pragmatic. I assure you of the support of the French delegation to that end.

We must recognize that since the Commission's previous session, last year, serious crises have continued to spread and it is therefore urgent that we develop joint responses. There has been a proliferation of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, while the risk that they could be used by States or terrorist groups continues to pose a very real danger. In North Korea and Syria, non-proliferation standards, which are the cornerstone of our collective security, are regularly, and even openly, violated. The unacceptable recklessness of North Korean leaders, based on the rapid development of their nuclear and ballistic programmes, remains a cause of deep concern. The Security Council, through an unprecedented strengthening of its sanctions, has affirmed its determination not to tolerate such provocations and destabilizing behaviour.

The same also applies to chemical weapons, of which we have seen another example today. I remind the Commission that responsibility for such inhumane acts has already been attributed to the Syrian army, in three instances, and to Da'esh, in one instance, by the

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. The potential existence of chemical stocks on Syrian territory increases the risk of the proliferation of toxic chemicals, including among non-State actors. France will not tolerate this reversal, and those responsible for those actions should be held accountable.

These irrefutable facts do not end there. Conventional weapons continue to pose a major security challenge for all the regions of the world, whether they are affected by conflict or not. The year that just ended showed that the international community should continue to take action in the area of conventional weapons in order to prevent conventional weapons from falling into the hands of terrorist groups. Like other countries, France has, tragically, witnessed these problems.

Moreover, the threat of the use of biological weapons remains a matter of great concern. The risk of a biological agent falling into the hands of States or terrorist groups cannot be ruled out.

Finally, let us not forget that we increasingly rely on space applications. The spatial environment continues to deteriorate and is today facing many challenges, which we must address.

Those examples serve to illustrate the uncertainty and complexity of the strategic and security context we are working in. Given those challenges, it is more important than ever to re-establish and maintain coherency and cooperation in our efforts. In the current context, such a commitment to work applies to all of us at the bilateral, regional and international levels and, first and foremost, to the disarmament community. Renewing dialogue is essential to the credibility of our shared determination to build a better world for current and future generations. We must guard against polarized debates involving positions and initiatives that divide us, as well as speeches and actions that distract us and may jeopardize the instruments that have already been established. On the contrary, we should opt for a constructive discussion with concrete and realistic initiatives that allow us to move towards general and complete disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

I hope that 2017 will allow us to show that we are capable of doing so. I also think that, with the opening of the new NPT review cycle and the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the next Review Conference, which is less than one month away, the NPT must remain the cornerstone of our collective security system. In that regard, allow me to recall my country's unambiguous commitment to nuclear disarmament, which we have demonstrated in both words and actions.

Our actions have been clear and transparent. As to France's seriousness, I would mention the irreversible dismantling of our nuclear testing site and the shutting down of our facilities for the production of fissile material for weapons; the zeroing out of the land-based component of our deterrence; the reduction by one third of our sea- and air-based missiles; and the legally binding negative security guarantees that have been agreed with nearly 100 countries.

Our words have been clear, realistic and based on a pragmatic vision. As stated by the President of the Republic, France shares the ultimate goal of the total elimination of weapons once the strategic context allows it. Therefore, disarmament must take into account all the factors that affect strategic stability. Logically, therefore, the only realistic and pragmatic approach to nuclear disarmament is a step-by-step approach that does not jeopardize regional or international stability and is in accordance with the principle of undiminished security for all.

The principle of the immediate prohibition of nuclear weapons is incompatible with such a pragmatic and progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, as established in article VI of the NPT. In a strategic context that is characterized, at both the national and international levels, by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, can we realistically say that the security conditions for a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons really exist? Can we believe that this initiative will not divide the States parties to the NPT, at the risk of undermining it? That is how my country, and a number of others that continue to base their ultimate security on nuclear deterrence, see things. For those reasons, like other partners, France will not participate in the negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.

On the other hand, we are in favour of specific disarmament measures within the essential framework of the NPT, which should remain the foundation of our collective security. Negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty and the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are crucial, complementary steps

towards that goal. France will also actively participate in the high-level expert group on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which will meet in Geneva from 31 July to 11 August. In that regard, the General Assembly's adoption by a large majority of resolution 71/259, which initiated the group's work, shows that tangible progress is possible in the context of a progressive and pragmatic approach to nuclear disarmament.

A comprehensive approach to disarmament and non-proliferation requires us to act, given other deadlines this year, in particular in the field of conventional weapons. As in many other areas, there is no single response, but a series of specific, adapted and consistent measures whose primary aim must be to strengthen international security by taking into account the security concerns of all and to ensure that all parties benefit.

The universalization and full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, which includes 130 signatories and more than 90 States parties, should be a priority. The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has made it possible to bolster a joint understanding of the threat posed by the illicit traffic in these deadly weapons. At the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, the international community will have to rise to the challenge this threat poses, while the third Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which will be held in 2018, will allow us to take stock of the actions undertaken so far and to look ahead. It should be an opportunity to take full account of the security risks generated by the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and to work towards the implementation of concrete measures. As Chair of the Conference, France will aim for a complete, inclusive and transparent preparatory process to that end.

The Biological Weapons Convention is also an essential tool for safeguarding international peace and security. The results of the eighth Review Conference were disappointing. We must collectively draw lessons from them and work to ensure the success of the next conference of the States parties, in December 2017. The adoption this year of concrete and realistic decisions is needed to preserve the authority and strengthen the implementation of standards prohibiting biological weapons.

Finally, turning to outer space, which I mentioned earlier, France welcomed the consensus adoption in June by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space of the first set of 12 guidelines on the long-term viability of space activities. The responses must be pragmatic and look for specific and immediately measurable benefits. That is why France promotes the adoption of transparency and confidence-building measures and of standards to guide the behaviour of stakeholders in space. My delegation hopes that we can agree on the inclusion of an agenda item on outer space for our work this year.

Allow me to conclude, Madam Chair, by reiterating my delegation's support and by assuring you that France will participate constructively and pragmatically in the work of the Commission.

Mr. Barro (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to express my sympathy and condolences to the delegation of the Russian Federation following the attack in Saint Petersburg yesterday.

Senegal associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Cameroon, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

I would like to express to you, Madam Chair, my heartfelt congratulations on your election to lead this session of the Disarmament Commission and to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and warmly commend the outgoing Chairs of the two Working Groups for their outstanding efforts, which will make it possible for us to make progress during the Commission's current session. I assure the new Chair's of my delegation's support. We have high hopes for a productive session leading to recommendations in this final year of the current cycle, which began under Senegal's chairship, in 2015.

Between 1977 and 1999, the Commission was able to adopt 16 directives, guidelines and recommendations. However, the Commission has been blocked for the past 18 years and has been unable to reach agreement on a significant outcome. It is certainly true that the global disarmament and non-proliferation regimes continue to face many obstacles that considerably undermine the legitimate efforts made by Member States in this area. Nonetheless, my country hopes the Commission will be able to make specific recommendations on the issues on its agenda this year, which is also the sixty-fifth

anniversary of its establishment, on 11 January 1952, by virtue of resolution 502 (VI).

As States, we must make a collective diplomatic effort and show increased political will if we aspire to effectively respond to the security challenges we face. A multilateral approach is therefore the only valid option, given the global nature of issues related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which are best addressed in the framework of universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory multilateral agreements. Unilateralism and the pursuit of solely national interests can lead only to mistrust, suspicion, lack of understanding, defiance and confrontation.

Furthermore, the increasing importance of disarmament and non-proliferation challenges, which have recently given rise to action, should serve to facilitate a positive outcome this year. It is therefore essential that we work to restore the credibility of the Commission, which requires that we go beyond discussions that in the past have prevented us from developing recommendations.

As far as conventional weapons are concerned, we welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, in December 2014, and the second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which was held successfully in Geneva in August 2016.

Nonetheless, my country remains concerned about the illicit trade, transfer, production, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons, as well as their excessive stockpiling and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly the African continent, where we continue to be subjected to the pernicious and destabilizing effects of their illegal transfer. We therefore urge countries that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty in order to ensure its universalization, which continues to contribute to the control of such weapons, and call for strengthening the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is still not legally binding, as well as the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. My country also welcomes the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in June last year.

With regard to nuclear weapons, Senegal deplores the failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in 2015, which, regrettably, was unable to adopt a consensus final document. Nevertheless, rather than discouraging us, that failure should make us redouble our efforts to achieve our ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament. Based on that firm belief, my country is more committed than ever to the complete elimination of military nuclear activities as the only way to prevent the global devastation and misery that would result from the use of nuclear weapons. That is why we believe that it is more important than ever to ensure that ridding the world of nuclear weapons is a shared fundamental goal for us all. We also remain convinced that strengthening the authority of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which has yet to be universalized, is a top priority, as is the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the implementation of all obligations under the NPT and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

However, the nuclear-weapon States must agree on an irreversible, verifiable and more ambitious programme for reducing their arsenals, while at the same time guaranteeing the security of non-nuclear-weapon States through a legally binding instrument. We firmly believe that existing nuclear-weapon-free zones must be strengthened and new ones created, particularly in the Middle East. Lastly, we reaffirm the right of countries to pursue the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to ensure the effective and secure transfer of such technologies to States that have assumed their obligations under the NPT, which will require strengthening the authority and capabilities of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In conclusion, we believe that with the commitment of all of us, the Disarmament Commission will be able to reach strong consensus on the items under its consideration over the coming weeks. It is important to show that we have the political will to restore its credibility.

Mr. Garrido Melo (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing my delegation's heartfelt condolences to the Russian delegation and the people of the Russian Federation for yesterday's heinous attack in the Saint Petersburg metro.

I would like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election to preside over the Disarmament Commission, and to express our pleasure at seeing a fellow Latin American guiding our deliberations. Last week, the great majority of us participated in another process, that of negotiating a draft convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, also steered by a distinguished Latin American diplomat. That is clearly no mere coincidence. We would also like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge and thank Mr. Kim Won-soo and his team for their exemplary work in the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/CN.10/PV.362). Their considerations and views reflect the position of Chile's delegation.

Chile has always been a staunch proponent and promoter of general and complete disarmament, and has always encouraged a broad, transparent and democratic multilateral debate, consistent with its foreign policy. That is clearly borne out by our participation in regional and global forums on international security and disarmament. We adhere strictly to the principle of the indivisibility of international security, by which all States, regardless of size or power, have the shared responsibility of contributing to building an international order based on cooperation and governed by rules.

We firmly support the notion that this forum must provide a more focused debate that can accurately identify the elements of disarmament and enable us to fully carry out our mandate of generating recommendations and to move on after years of stagnation. The Disarmament Commission has not been able to avoid the current crisis in the disarmament machinery. The fact that it operates under the most extreme version of the consensus rule has changed the meaning and scope that this body acquired over many years as a generator of dialogue and promoter of broad agreements.

One cause that is extremely important to Chile is the democratization of international organizations and of multilateralism in general. In that regard, we believe that civil society is called on to play a major role in disarmament, unhampered by procedural limitations. Last week, during the conference to negotiate a draft convention prohibiting nuclear weapons, we were able to witness the significant ways in which civil society, particularly academia, can contribute to our work. I think we ought to seriously consider that idea.

Chile believes that nuclear disarmament, considered in the context of weapons of mass destruction, is the most pressing issue we have to deal with, owing to its incomparably destructive capability, which puts humankind's very existence in jeopardy. That is why the deliberations of this forum and its potential recommendations are crucial.

We would also like to highlight the fact that in recent years we have successfully consolidated and improved the instruments governing conventional weapons. That represents significant progress for international humanitarian law and a clear manifestation of the concept of human security, which puts human beings at the centre of our work. However, practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons are also key. As we begin the last year of the three-year cycle, we should once again commit to taking a pragmatic and flexible approach to the upcoming negotiations, with a view to achieving concrete results, and to which the delegation of Chile pledges its full support.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing Brazil's solidarity with the people and the Government of the Russian Federation in the wake of yesterday's horrific terrorist attacks.

I would also like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to preside over the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are pleased to see a country from our region presiding over the Commission. I pledge the support of my delegation as you discharge your duties.

(*spoke in English*)

Brazil aligns itself with the statement delivered previously by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States(see A/CN.10/PV.362), and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Nuclear disarmament is a long-standing objective of the international community. Our understanding of the indiscriminate power of nuclear weapons and the existential threat they pose to humankind has resulted in several initiatives and proposals aimed at

eliminating them. This issue was the subject of the General Assembly's very first resolution, resolution 1(I), which affirmed the goal of the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. At the beginning of the work of the Organization, the existence of such indiscriminate and destructive weapons already sat badly with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is regrettable that, 71 years later, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain unresolved issues on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Brazil is firmly committed to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation. In our view, the key to a sustainable non-proliferation regime lies in combating the incentives to proliferate. Any approach is illogical when it focuses exclusively on non-proliferation while ignoring necessary progress in nuclear disarmament and some countries' insistence on relying on a nuclear deterrent. How can we legitimately argue that such weapons are too devastating to be possessed by most of us but can still be retained by a few? As former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has repeatedly said, there are no right hands for wrong weapons.

The nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime is under increasing strain, as the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to adopt an outcome document showed. While States that possess nuclear weapons or belong to alliances that contemplate the possibility of resorting to nuclear weapons persist in their unwillingness to significantly reduce their reliance on them, the grand bargain that enabled the NPT to come into being becomes increasingly harder to sustain, thereby threatening both the nuclear-disarmament and the non-proliferation pillars of the Treaty. The continued existence of nuclear weapons is a threat to humankind. Such weapons increase tensions throughout the world, foster suspicion and hinder cooperation. The limited reductions that have been made so far are unfortunately offset by the continuing modernization and qualitative improvement of nuclear arsenals.

The Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna deepened our collective realization of the immediate, mid- and long-term grave consequences of a nuclear-weapon explosion, which would not be confined to national borders but would have regional and even global effects, thus threatening the survival of our planet. Those devastating and indiscriminate effects would mainly affect the civilian population, which makes them incompatible with international law, particularly international humanitarian and human rights law. As Governments, we must view their elimination as a moral and ethical imperative and a legal obligation.

I reiterate Brazil's conviction that nuclear weapons should be prohibited and completely eliminated in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner, according to clearly defined benchmarks and timelines. Just last week, the United Nations took a historic step in that regard with the convening of the first session of a conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination. We welcome the substantive engagement of all the delegations present and are confident that the conference will succeed in fulfilling its mandate of adopting a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons at the end of its second session. In line with resolution 69/77, which recommended that the Disarmament Commission's agenda provide for focused deliberations, Brazil believes that the Commission should concentrate on those three important aspects of nuclear disarmament — transparency, irreversibility and verification. That would ensure that its work complements and builds on the efforts ongoing in the conference. Among other things, discussions on verification could build on the 16 verification principles that the Commission agreed on in 1988.

Brazil participates regularly in confidence-building mechanisms at the multilateral level, such as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. We also submit regular reports under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Furthermore, Brazil is a party to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and has signed the Arms Trade Treaty, currently in the process of being ratified. Confidence-building measures at the regional level are also relevant. Brazil and its neighbours in South America are strengthening confidence and enhancing transparency in defence policies,

including on information on military expenditures and conventional arms transfers. While we recognize the important role of confidence-building measures, we are open to considering other aspects relating to conventional weapons that could be dealt with by the Disarmament Commission.

Brazil would like to see the consideration of a third agenda item, as also provided for in resolution 69/77, and supports the proposal submitted at the Commission's previous session for making that item the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We look forward to engaging in the informal consultations to be convened on the issue. We would like to emphasize that the addition of a third agenda item should not detract from efforts to advance the other two, nor should it be used to create artificial linkages between separate issues. Each topic must be considered on its own merits.

The multilateral disarmament machinery has played a crucial role in fostering dialogue and confidence among States, thereby helping to promote peace and security. With specific regard to the Disarmament Commission, I would like to underscore the verification principles, which constitute a fundamental element of any disarmament treaty; the 1996 guidelines on international arms transfers; and the 1999 guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, to name only a few important outcomes of past sessions. The last of those in particular has been politically important to the development of such zones around the world, including the long-overdue establishment of one in the Middle East.

Those achievements notwithstanding, the Disarmament Commission has unfortunately failed to fulfil its mandate for the past 18 years. There can be no rational justification for a failure to reach agreement on substantive recommendations this year, which will conclude the current triennial cycle. While no one denies the complexity of the current global security situation, we must not forget that this body was able to agree on recommendations to the General Assembly during times of great tension such as the Cold War. Greater political will is needed, Madam Chair, to break the Commission's deadlock, and you can rest assured of Brazil's constructive engagement towards that objective.

Mr. Díaz Reina (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Colombia, I would first like to convey our sincere condolences to the Russian delegation in connection with yesterday's attack in Saint Petersburg. We stand by the Government and the people of the Russian Federation at this difficult time.

I echo previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam Chair, on your election. Your leadership during this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission will be crucial if we are to overcome the protracted impasse of more than 15 years on some of the issues that we will consider in the next few days.

Colombia aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the representatives of El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV. 362).

My delegation recognizes and reaffirms that, in the framework of the disarmament machinery, the Disarmament Commission is the designated forum for addressing specific issues with a view to making relevant and concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. We also trust that this year the need for consensus will not result in the use of the veto, which would make it impossible to reach any agreement. My statement will cover five specific points — anti-personnel mines, conventional weapons, cluster munitions, weapons of mass destruction and Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 2321 (2016).

First, considering that this week we celebrate the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, I would like to start by mentioning the fact that more than 15 years ago Colombia, in recognition of its international obligations and its particular circumstances, decided to launch a comprehensive mine-action programme based on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, including mine clearance and decontamination activities, victim assistance, mine-risk education and cooperation and international assistance. We would like to stress the importance of mine action in the negotiations on the agreement to end the conflict that culminated in its signing in November 2016. It played a key role from the very beginning of the process with the implementation of pilot demining projects in El Orejón, in Antioquia, and Santa Helena, in Meta, which became a model for confidence-building measures between the parties and marked the start of the joint efforts by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia guerrillas, the armed forces, civil organizations and

civil society that paved the way for reconciliation and reparation. Post-conflict reconstruction through mine action will directly benefit the affected communities and contribute to their development.

Secondly, Colombia is of the view that the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives is a cross-cutting issue that is directly linked to other threats to international peace and security such as international terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, money-laundering and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Colombia's participation in international, regional and subregional conventional-weapon forums is based on three guiding principles — banning the transfer of weapons to non-State actors, criminalizing the illegal possession and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, and promoting inter-institutional and international cooperation and information-sharing. In an example of our active participation in that regard, at the General Assembly's current session Colombia coordinated the drafting of resolution 71/48, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects". We presented the resolution, which was sponsored by more than 80 countries, jointly with South Africa and Japan and incorporated into it several elements of the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Thirdly, I would like to note Colombia's position that banning cluster munitions, in addition to being a treaty goal, benefits the international community by prohibiting a weapon that has claimed a vast number of victims and has dehumanized and degraded conflicts, in violation of international law. In that connection, we reiterate that eliminating such weapons is a moral imperative for the international community, and we hope it will soon be a legal obligation for all States, on a basis of solidarity and cooperation. Colombia is committed to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In that regard, in 2009, despite the fact that the Convention on Cluster Munitions had not yet entered into force, Colombia worked to promote its principles, voluntarily and practically honouring its provisions and eliminating all its stocks of such weapons in an example of best practices at the national and international level.

Fourthly, Colombia has continued its constitutional commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation with regard to weapons of mass destruction. For a country like mine, which has sought and yearned for peace for so long, revitalizing the disarmament machinery is crucial, as is seeing significant progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. That is why, as a State party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Colombia has been participating in the conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. In that context, Colombia believes that these distinct approaches are complementary rather than mutually exclusive, given that they have in common the implementation of article VI of the NPT and that actions aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons must be inclusive and based on ongoing dialogue with nuclear-weapon States.

With regard to chemical weapons, Colombia is committed to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime for weapons of mass destruction, in particular based on its status as a signatory to the Convention on Chemical Weapons, and fully supports the international verification efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as a means of implementing and complementing the Convention. We believe it is essential to strengthen education on the responsible uses of chemistry, to improve the awareness of the industry and the education sector about the Convention's provisions and to enhance assistance and protection in the case of incidents involving chemical weapons. Finally, with regard to biological weapons, Colombia advocates the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention, the first multilateral disarmament treaty to ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction as the only way of eliminating the threat posed by the malicious use of pathogens.

Lastly, with regard to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), Colombia and Chile have been working on a peer-review mechanism to enable both countries to share best practices and lessons learned during its implementation. With the support of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, Colombia and Chile will share information on the relevant institutions and policies in their respective countries so as to facilitate the resolution's implementation. It will

be the first project of that nature in Latin America and the Caribbean and the second worldwide.

Finally, I would like to point out that Colombia is committed to implementing the Security Council's sanctions on non-proliferation and therefore abides by the provisions of resolution 2321 (2016) and those of previous resolutions regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Colombia has appealed urgently for an end to any action that undermines peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and for that country's full compliance with international commitments to disarmament and non-proliferation.

In conclusion, Colombia believes that all disarmament and non-proliferation efforts should be accompanied by transparency- and confidence-building measures and ongoing dialogue among the States Members of the United Nations. We therefore participate in international forums, such as the Disarmament Commission, that consider subjects of general interest, providing an opportunity to reaffirm the commitment and the essential political will of all its attendees to attain the objectives that inspired the creation of our Organization. The delegation of Colombia pledges its full support for the success of the Commission, which for so many years has failed to produce concrete results.

Mr. Jiménez (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua is pleased to congratulate you on your election as Chair, Madam, and wishes you every success. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

We would also like to echo the message of solidarity sent by our President, Mr. Daniel Ortega, to the Russian Federation in the wake of the attack in the Saint Petersburg metro yesterday, and to express our solidarity with the Russian people and the families of the victims.

My delegation endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) and by El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

My delegation supports the work being carried out by the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We need to preserve its relevance by continuing to discuss specific disarmament-related issues with a view to submitting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. It is unfortunate that we have been unable to make such recommendations in previous sessions.

Nicaragua emphasizes the importance of making progress towards the achievement of complete disarmament, which includes not only weapons of mass destruction, but also highly destructive and indiscriminate conventional weapons, the use of which contravenes the fundamental principles of international law and international humanitarian law. In that regard we welcome the recent General Assembly resolution 71/71, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", a NAM initiative that calls for the holding of a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament by 2018 at the latest. With that, our countries fulfil their objective of intensifying the call on States to initiate negotiations on a convention, in accordance with a set time frame, on the prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We welcome the designation of 26 September as International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons as a way of raising awareness.

With regard to disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, Nicaragua, as a State party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), calls for evaluation of the resolutions and declaration on the subject so that progress can be made to stop the arms race and find the means to ensure their complete eradication under a transparent and effective international system of control.

With regard to General Assembly resolution 71/258 — which, among other things, calls for the holding in 2018 of a conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination — Nicaragua believes that all States Members of the United Nations should participate in the process, without exception, in order to reach a tangible, effective and suitable solution. We also believe that such an instrument should be universal in nature and support efforts to include humanitarian concerns in discussions on nuclear weapons. In that regard, we welcome the three international conferences on the impact of nuclear weapons.

Nicaragua regrets that some countries blocked the consensus needed to conclude a final document at the ninth NPT review conference. Its failure undermined multilateral efforts and the disarmament

machinery, which was working to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, and also affected its credibility and dependability. The international community should take concrete action, and nuclear States should immediately implement their commitments under article VI of the NPT, the agreements in the area of nuclear disarmament reached in 2000 and the plan of action on nuclear disarmament adopted in 2010. We reaffirm our hope that a legally binding instrument will be adopted that guarantees the safety of States, regardless of their type or geographical location. Such a document should take into account the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 1996 (A/51/218, annex), which indicated that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity as well as a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

We applaud and welcome the implementation of the plan of action concluded between Iran and the countries of the P5+1, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency, which contributes to international peace and security. Nicaragua respects the inalienable rights of all States to conduct research, produce and peacefully use nuclear technology, without discrimination and in accordance with the provisions of the NPT.

Nicaragua, as a member of the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We firmly believe that it is through the establishment of such zones that we can strengthen the regime and international peace and security, contributing to nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we regret the failure to implement the agreement to hold in 2012 a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate that the holding of such a conference is an important part of the final document of the NPT Review Conference. We therefore urge parties to hold this conference as soon as possible.

With regard to confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, we welcome measures that will promote international peace and security. These need to be taken in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respecting the specific security concerns of States. My country has made a commitment to and has taken the corresponding actions to prevent and eliminate the illicit trade in arms. Nicaragua has made a commitment to peace for its people and has committed to combat and eradicate illicit drug trafficking. In that regard we have adopted special law No. 510 on the monitoring and regulation of firearms, munitions, explosives and related materials.

Nicaragua was proud to welcome the historic official proclamation of Latin America as a zone of peace on 29 January 2014, the purpose of which is to forever eradicate the threat or use of force in our region. It includes the firm commitment of the States of the region to nuclear disarmament as a priority objective. We also welcome the establishment of Latin America as a zone free of cluster munitions, which was declared during the fifth meeting of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2014. Our country participates in the fight against anti-personnel mines and in 2010 successfully implemented a national demining programme and declared Nicaragua and all of Central America to be the first subregion free of land mines. We stress the importance of cooperation for demining and providing assistance to victims, and hope that there will be continued success in future.

Many have pointed out that the disarmament machinery has come to a standstill. However, we have been unable to resolve the real problem, which is the political will of States to make tangible progress, in particular in terms of nuclear disarmament. It is under those complex conditions that we must work in the Commission. We must continue to promote a peace-loving world to attain the goal of living well, especially to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With the requisite will, it is never too late to make changes.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq): (*spoke in Arabic*) My delegation would first like to express its condolences to the Russian delegation and the families of the victims of the act of terrorism that took place in the Saint Petersburg metro, leaving many dead or injured. We appreciate the role of Russia in fighting international terrorism, a phenomenon facing many countries around the world.

My delegation wishes to congratulate you, Madam, on assuming the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for the 2017 session. We are confident that your expertise and diplomatic acumen will allow us to reach a positive outcome on the topics that the Commission will consider during the session. We assure you and the members of

the Bureau of our support in ensuring the success of our work.

My delegation also takes this opportunity to congratulate the delegation of Venezuela on its appointment as Chair of Working Group I and the delegation of Bulgaria on its appointment as Chair of Working Group II.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Arab States and of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Iraq has stressed its position vis-à-vis disarmament and non-proliferation matters. Article 9 (e) of our Constitution states that the Government respects and implements the international obligations of Iraq to prohibit the proliferation, development, production and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and prohibits the development, manufacturing, production and use of related material technology and communication systems.

The Government of Iraq is aware that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is one of the chief components providing the international community with a real guarantee against the use or threat of use of deadly weapons. It is also a guarantee for establishing international peace and security by reaching common and practical solutions through multilateral negotiations to reach collective agreements. Therefore my Government voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 71/258 on establishing a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination.

My Government also condemns the nuclear and ballistic-missile tests carried out by North Korea, which threaten international peace and security. We call on North Korea to cease these experiments, which threaten the countries of the region and violate Security Council resolutions.

My Government is concerned about the possibility of weapons of mass destruction ending up in the hands of terrorist groups, and we stress the need for concerted efforts by everyone to contribute to preventing non-State parties from acquiring such weapons, given that nuclear terrorism is the biggest and most dangerous threat to international security. We must therefore enhance nuclear-security measures as a necessary means for preventing nuclear materials from reaching the hands of terrorists and other unauthorized entities. We call on all relevant parties to implement effective security measures on nuclear materials and their possession, including nuclear weapons and nuclear facilities under their control, and to prevent any non-governmental entities from acquiring the information and technology necessary to use such materials for criminal purposes.

Establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone is a step towards nuclear disarmament. Any effort to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East must begin with some major steps. Notably, Israel must join and ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and subject its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime. It must also get rid of its nuclear weapons completely. We call for the implementation of Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which calls on Israel to immediately place its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We urge for the implementation of paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991), which calls for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in the Middle East. We further call on the Secretary-General and the sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to fulfil their obligations with respect to the full implementation of this resolution by establishing such a zone in the Middle East and to follow up on the 2010 agreement to hold a nuclear disarmament conference in the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the assistance of the sponsoring States: the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia.

The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on a draft outcome document is a setback for international efforts to rid the region of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and has prevented any review of obligations met over the past few years. My Government therefore stresses the need to commit to the 1995 resolution on the basis of which an indefinite extension was granted to NPT, with the understanding that its validity is based on whether its objectives are met.

My delegation takes this opportunity to stress the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty, especially developing countries, to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to achieve economic growth, without discrimination and

impediments, provided that their activities are subjected to the control of the IAEA and the requirements of the NPT regime.

Like other member States, we are aware of the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. At the same time we would like to express our concern about its current state. Since it has been unable to fulfil its role in terms of reaching an agreement on a programme of work, we must redouble our efforts to achieve a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that meets the concerns of all member States.

The dangers posed by conventional weapons have many repercussions and can be similar to those of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. My delegation is aware of the negative effects of these weapons with respect to impeding the process of development and societies. They play a major role in armed conflicts and are a source of concern for many countries. We must therefore make serious and concerted efforts to implement international resolutions to combat the spread of these weapons and ensure that they do not end up in the hands of armed terrorists groups that use any means necessary to acquire such weapons and use them against civilians, especially women and children.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that we are fully prepared to cooperate with you, Madam, and the other members of the Bureau to determine the best possible methods to achieve the purposes of the Commission. You can rely on the support and assistance of the delegation of Iraq.

Ms. Dris (Malaysia): At the outset, Malaysia joins other delegations in expressing its condolences to the people and the Government of the Russian Federation, as well as to the victims of the Saint Petersburg metro explosions. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time.

Malaysia congratulates you, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for the 2017 substantive session. Let me also congratulate all the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the respective Working Groups. My delegation would also like to thank Ambassador Odo Tevi, Permanent Representative of Vanuatu, for his contribution and efforts as Chair of the UNDC in 2016.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

As we enter the last phase of the triennial cycle, the UNDC must exert much-needed leadership, display the required political will and commit to exercising flexibility on long-standing positions to achieve concrete results. That is essential to ensure that the Commission does not lose its credibility as the sole specialized body with universal membership in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

With three weeks ahead of us, we believe that we should build on the momentum of the recently concluded United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination. The spirit of cooperation and constructive discussions shown by delegations during the Conference should be emulated by us here at the Commission.

Malaysia continues to uphold the principles that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) must continue to guide our vision to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Malaysia wishes to also recall the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons (A/51/218, annex) of 8 July 1996. The advisory opinion, among other things, unanimously concluded that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective control. We see merit in reiterating the urgency of conducting the Commission's work on the agenda of nuclear weapons in that context.

One month from now, many delegations will be in Vienna to participate in the first Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Malaysia is of the view that this year's Preparatory Committee is important as it provides us the opportunity yet again to collectively cooperate toward achieving the NPT objectives of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

With regard to conventional weapons, my delegation commends the progress made during the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its

Aspects in New York in June last year. We reiterate our concern that the danger posed by conventional weapons, especially in conflict situations, is alarming in terms of deaths and injuries.

My delegation remains committed to the establishment of adequate and stringent domestic laws to effectively control the circulation of and illicit trade in conventional arms. We also continue to support confidence-building measures at all levels in the field of conventional weapons and our collective efforts to strengthen international peace and security. We believe that more can be done to narrow the gap between divergent views of the membership in this field.

My delegation takes note of the fact that the programme of work will now include consultations on a third agenda item on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities. We hope that the third agenda creates a domino effect in encouraging progress on tangible recommendations on the first two agenda items in the work of the UNDC. Malaysia commits its full support and cooperation to you, Madam Chair, in engaging in the discussions of the Commission in a realistic and pragmatic manner.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): First, I wish to join others in extending Nepal's heartfelt condolences to and express solidarity with the Russian Federation in the face of the recent explosions in a metro station in Saint Petersburg. Our heart goes to the victims of the barbaric act and their loved ones at this tragic moment. Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations anywhere in the world.

Madam Chair, I congratulate you on your election to preside over the third phase of the triennial cycle of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and wish you every success in your efforts to steer the Commission in its new substantive session. I commend the excellent and dedicated stewardship of Senegal and Vanuatu in the first and second phases of the triennial cycle, respectively. I also congratulate the Bureau members, as well as the Chairs of the Working Groups, on their respective elections. My delegation is fully aware of the challenging task that you have assumed and expresses its readiness to work closely with you in order to achieve a fruitful outcome at the end of the triennial cycle.

I also thank Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for sharing with us his assessment on contemporary issues of disarmament.

Nepal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Apart from conventional challenges, the international community is confronted with ever-evolving and increasingly complex security challenges such as terrorism, violent extremism, epidemics, environmental disasters and cyberthreats, which spill over international borders. The increasing amount of worldwide military expenditures, the escalation of armed conflicts in various regions, rising terrorism and violent extremism and the State actions to counter, contain and eliminate them suggest a reversal of the two decades of post-Cold War peace and consequent challenges in ensuring national security, especially for smaller and weaker countries. Therefore, United Nations disarmament institutions should strengthen themselves, reinforce one another's activities and work in a complementary and synchronized fashion to achieve the objective of international peace and security as envisioned by the United Nations Charter. The UNDC, with its universal membership, has a particular responsibility to that end.

Despite having a commendable history of forging consensus on contentious issues of disarmament, as well as that of codifying principles, guidelines and recommendations to achieve universal disarmament, we have to acknowledge that the UNDC has failed to deliver any substantive recommendation since 1999. However, the world community should not forget that the fate of humankind relies on the wise decisions the Commission makes to achieve universal peace and security by rising to the challenges beyond the confines of the traditional concept of national security. The international community should demonstrate the requisite political commitment to enhancing trust and confidence so as to ensure mutual and collective security for each other. We should also be determined to address the current impasse in which the Commission finds itself by collectively, effectively and in a timely manner demonstrating our genuine political will and exercising our flexibility to the utmost.

Nepal reaffirms its principled position that it is only the time-bound, general and complete disarmament of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction that can ensure universal peace and security. Nepal continues to emphasize that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Abhorring the humanitarian

and environmental consequences of the deliberate or accidental detonation of nuclear arsenals, we also believe that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is against the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian and human rights laws.

As the sole specialized and deliberative forum within the United Nations disarmament architecture, the Disarmament Commission should also reinforce the ongoing negotiations to formulate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Nepal emphasizes that the States possessing nuclear weapons should respect the importance of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and the verifiability of nuclear weapons for their total elimination. Nepal believes that, as a core component of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, the credibility of NPT lies in the effective implementation of its mutually reinforcing pillars. We also support the inalienable right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy as per the framework set by this Treaty.

Nepal believes that confidence-building measures rooted in political commitments have the potential to create an environment conducive to general and complete disarmament. Apart from conducting a general exchange of information on military capability, States should abide strictly by the reporting obligations, compliance mechanisms and verification regimes established by multilateral instruments such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the NPT and the CTBT, among others. However, the major goal of such confidence-building measures should be the realization of universally recognized principles, particularly those contained in the Charter of the United Nations. My delegation believes that only a re-energized and consensus-oriented Disarmament Commission can strengthen the Secretary-General's call for a surge in diplomacy for peace by enhancing States' capacity to prevent conflict through various confidence-building measures.

Nepal also believes that women, youth, civil society, academia and the private sector have important roles to play in spreading awareness and educating the masses to urge their respective Governments to use confidence-building measures related to disarmament. My delegation therefore asks that all member States make full use of the potential of confidence-building measures in all regions of the world, generally, and among countries with competing and conflicting military aspirations in particular.

As the host of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal reaffirms that a regional approach to disarmament complements the global approach and should therefore be synchronized with a global approach to enhancing international peace and security. Nepal is also convinced that such regional mechanisms can play greater roles in promoting nuclear non-proliferation, general disarmament and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels to realize a peaceful world devoid of conflicts and misunderstanding among States. Such regional centres should therefore be further strengthened, well resourced and developed as repositories of best practices for disseminating disarmament-related information. In that regard, Nepal is committed to continuing to contribute to proactive measures by promoting disarmament activities and encouraging confidence-building at regional and subregional levels through education, as well as by providing track-II forums for that purpose.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate the central role of the Disarmament Commission in promoting the collective ownership and global responsibility of all States in the task of ensuring a peaceful world through non-proliferation, disarmament and confidence-building measures. We must muster the political will and courage to commit ourselves to engaging constructively with each other with the shared objectives of ensuring global peace and security, realizing a better future for humankind and strengthening collective security. As a staunch supporter of multilateral processes in disarmament affairs, Nepal urges the diversion of resources spent on armaments towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals so as to ensure a decent living for all humankind. We hope that the positive momentum generated by the first and second phases of the triennial cycle will be further consolidated in the current phase by forging consensus on substantive recommendations to eliminate nuclear weapons and promote confidence-building measures for general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Mero (United Republic of Tanzania): At the outset, allow me to express my deepest condolences

to the Government of the Russian Federation and to the relatives of those who died yesterday owing to the terrorist attack in the Saint Petersburg subway.

My delegation wishes to congratulate you, Madam Chair, and the Bureau on your well-deserved election. You have our confidence and assurance of cooperation and support.

The United Republic of Tanzania aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Cameroon on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.362). I will make the following remarks in my national capacity.

First, Tanzania recognizes the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. We note with concern that the Commission has not submitted any substantive recommendations to the General Assembly in the course of the previous years. Hence, we wish to underscore the need for the Commission to achieve concrete results in this third year of its three-year cycle.

Secondly, my delegation wishes to underscore the importance of achieving total, irreversible and verifiable disarmament of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Tanzania is concerned about the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, which failed to issue a final document, owing to a lack of political will among member States. In that regard, we believe that the United Nations conference should negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination as the ultimate goal. Tanzania also looks forward to a successful preparatory committee for the 2020 review conference of the parties to the NPT, which is envisaged to be convened from 2 to 12 May in Vienna.

Thirdly, my delegation underscores the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which continues to work with member States to promote the peaceful application of nuclear technology and nuclear energy in the world. Through its programme, it encourages nuclear safety and adherence to security standards. In that regard, the United Republic of Tanzania commends and supports its important role in promoting the safe and secure use of nuclear technology.

Fourthly, the United Republic of Tanzania has long been cognizant of the presence of weapons of mass destruction and of the grave threat that the presence of weapons of this nature poses to the peace and security of our nation, our continent and our world, especially if they fall into the hands of irresponsible non-State actors. Tanzania therefore calls on member States to take appropriate steps to prevent unauthorized access and hedge against terrorists from acquiring weapons of any kind in their respective countries.

Fifthly, the United Republic of Tanzania believes in the importance of the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and is deeply concerned about the implications of the arms race, such as the deployment of a ballistic-missile system and other unsafe systems in space. My delegation therefore calls on the international community to underline the importance of strict compliance and adherence with the relevant disarmament agreements and the existing legal regime concerning outer-space usage.

Sixthly, my delegation is acutely aware of the grave threat that the trafficking in conventional arms poses to peace and security in the world and specifically to the African continent. The regulation of conventional arms is of the utmost importance to prevent the proliferation of small arms, the exacerbation of violence, the displacement of people and poverty eradication. In this regard, Tanzania signed the Arms Trade Treaty on 3 June 2013 and strongly supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that this substantive session will come up with recommendations on its two agenda items: first, achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and, secondly, practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to express our solidarity with the Russian Federation in the face of the heinous terrorist attack that targeted the subway in Saint Petersburg. We condemn in the strongest possible terms any terrorist act, regardless of its motivation. There is no justification for terrorism or attacks or explosions targeting civilians.

Allow me to begin by expressing the sincere congratulations of the Kingdom of Morocco following your election, Madam Chair, to guide the work of

the Disarmament Commission and assure you of our full and complete cooperation. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, whose term will soon end, and to express my delegation's appreciation to him and, through him, to the whole Office for Disarmament Affairs for the commendable efforts it has made to monitor and manage disarmament issues within the United Nations.

The Moroccan delegation associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Last year, during the general debate of the Disarmament Commission, we heard an appeal by a number of non-nuclear States, advocating the launching of immediate negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the only weapons of mass destruction that are not subject to prohibition by a legally binding instrument in spite of their catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences.

Last week, this wish was made manifest when a large majority of States decided, in an unprecedented conference, to initiate a process to prohibit nuclear weapons in a global, universal and verifiable way. The position of Morocco, as Vice-Chair of that conference, was an expression of its commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as of its strong commitment to peace and security and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In moving towards a total and universal ban of nuclear weapons, we reiterate our conviction that all countries that wish to promote multilateralism and the defence of international law have an obligation to ensure the effective application of all the provisions contained in international treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation to build a world of peace and security for all. To this end, we believe it is our duty to do everything possible to implement the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and to ensure the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

We believe that, at the regional level, the creation of zones free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction are major objectives. The creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East has not yet taken place, despite the fact that this concern has been explicitly mentioned in successive decisions of the NPT review conferences. In our view, it is crucial to convene, without further delay, an international conference to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, an initiative which has been continuously delayed.

Like many other States, Morocco can only deplore the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, the unique multilateral negotiating body for multilateral disarmament instruments. We all know that the obstacles to the Conference on Disarmament are of a political nature, and the lethargy it has been mired in for years contrasts with the new security challenges facing the world and the chances of general and complete disarmament. Morocco remains ready to constructively consider all initiatives aimed at giving new impetus to the United Nations disarmament mechanisms, including ending the two impasses in the Conference on Disarmament, while remaining committed to its integrity and mandate.

Within the framework of the Disarmament Commission, Morocco, which chaired the Working Group on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, welcomes the spirit it saw during the two sessions of the triennial cycle, despite the Commission's inability to reach a consensus on substantive recommendations on its agenda items. We encourage States to show flexibility and political will to facilitate agreements in the Disarmament Commission. No approach should be ruled out from consideration, as that is the spirit of the Commission.

In April 2000, the Kingdom of Morocco ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), whose objective is to make the prohibition on nuclear tests irreversible, transparent and verifiable. The Kingdom regrets the late entry into force of the Treaty. Faced with increased nuclear threats, we are convinced that a multilateral approach, coupled with genuine Inter-State confidence, is needed more than ever to bring the countries that are reluctant to ratify the CTBT to do so and, consequently, to hasten its entry into force.

The illicit trade in conventional weapons continues to threaten African States and to fuel terrorism and organized crime. Morocco believes that regional and subregional cooperation are essential drivers in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light

weapons. The worrying situation we see in the Sahelo-Saharan region because of the connections that exist between arms-trafficking networks and terrorist groups challenges all of us to step up our efforts to strengthen regional cooperation through an inclusive approach.

My country attaches particular importance to the exchange of information and experience and to strengthening international and regional cooperation in the field of security and in the fight against the illicit trafficking in biological, radioactive and nuclear material. Morocco is an active member of the United Nations Group of Friends on Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation and Security Governance. The Kingdom participates in a number of international initiatives, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit process. Later this year, Morocco, in the framework of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), will organize a workshop for African focal points.

Lastly, allow me to express the hope that the Disarmament Commission, under your leadership, Madam Chair, will succeed in reaching a consensus on a programme of work in order to pave the way for the adoption of recommendations. In doing so, we could meet the expectations of the international community to eliminate nuclear weapons as quickly as possible and achieve the noble objective of a world free of this threat.

Mr. Weinoh (Nigeria): My delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing its heartfelt condolences to the Russian Federation and the victims of yesterday's dastardly terrorist attack.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2017 substantive session. As you steer the course of our work, my delegation is confident that your experience will guide our deliberations during this session. We assure you of our full cooperation.

We would also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu, for his leadership and contributions, as well as to the previous Chairs of the two Working Groups for their dedication and hard work, and to Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his kind remarks.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made, respectively, by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Cameroon, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Nigeria underscores the importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. While recognizing its usefulness and potential as the competent forum for addressing issues concerning comprehensive nuclear disarmament, we wish to state that the Disarmament Commission needs to streamline and improve upon its working methods to enable it to deliver on its mandate, with particular reference to nuclear disarmament as the top priority, and to pointedly confront the challenges of non-proliferation. Without a doubt, the continued existence of nuclear weapons remains an existential threat to all humankind. The costs of maintaining and modernizing such weapons are both outrageous and inexcusable when compared to the resources allocated by States for more useful and productive ventures that will further growth, development, prosperity and other peaceful and positive articulations of human endeavours.

Several UNDC sessions have been concluded without concrete outcomes owing to a lack of political will and the inflexible positions of States. Given that this year's session marks the final lap of a three-year cycle, which began in 2015, my delegation hopes to see an outcome that provides for modest and unambiguous recommendations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Such a result will no doubt justify our persistence and convey the determination of the States Members of the United Nations for improvement in the scale and pace of nuclear disarmament, which has remained stalled for decades.

My delegation recalls the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), 47 years ago, and the convening of its ninth Review Conference, in May 2015. Despite the unacceptable outcome of the most recent NPT Review Conference regarding the implementation of the Treaty's disarmament obligations, the NPT, alongside other nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation measures, has remained partly successful in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. My delegation stresses that its universalization is dependent upon strict compliance with its three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation

and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As we prepare for the next Review Conference, in 2020, beginning with the first session of the Preparatory Committee in May this year, my delegation hopes that the efforts of Member States will be geared towards strengthening the NPT by truly reinforcing its three pillars.

Nuclear weapons are, by definition, instruments whose sole objective its mass destruction. It has repeatedly been demonstrated that they are inhumane and intolerable weapons that should be taken off the list of global armaments as responsible and respected partners in human development projects. Curiously, they remain the only weapons of mass destruction yet to be prohibited. My delegation seizes this opportunity to again highlight the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex), which affirms that the threat or use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

My delegation emphasizes the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from either a deliberate or unintentional explosion of nuclear weapons. That should serve as a compelling reason for some States to end their unnecessary denial of the existential threat faced by the human race and should highlight the urgent need to address the question of the continued possession of nuclear weapons. In that context, Nigeria welcomed the General Assembly's adoption last year of resolution 71/258 by an overwhelming majority of States, as well as the successful convening of the first session of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination. The reports on the active participation by States and civil-society groups during the the conference pointed to the fact that nuclear weapons are unwelcome in any form. As negotiations are set to begin in the June/July session, my delegation calls on all States, including nuclear-weapon States and all those under their shield, to be part of the epoch-making process, so that the world can collectively achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament and ensure a nuclear-weapon-free world.

As a party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, Nigeria welcomes the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts the world. The Treaty serves as a shield for the continent of Africa, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of nuclear weapons. As a measure to ensure a world free from the fear or possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, my delegation further calls on all Member States to support efforts to replicate that measure in the remaining parts of the world, including in the Middle East.

As they did during the 2016 session, our deliberations will focus on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. My delegation considers it to be a fair and useful attempt at enriching our deliberations on all layers of disarmament. While the role of the UNDC in developing that concept is well noted, the Commission should take it a step further by translating those agreed elements into reality.

In the field of conventional weapons, Nigeria has continually highlighted the measures that have been taken in recent times to address the proliferation of conventional weapons, particularly the illicit acquisition and use of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. A number of States in Africa are suffering from the illicit trade in such weapons. We therefore recognize the necessity and importance of engaging all States to significantly contribute to national and regional efforts to address the menace of illicit small arms and light weapons, including by significantly adhering to the elements of international cooperation and assistance. We hope that this session will highlight the importance of upholding our commitments in the course of our deliberations.

Nigeria remains committed to the principle and objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and continues to urge its universalization. We call upon on all States to ensure its effective implementation as the first legally binding global instrument to regulate the trade in conventional arms. Indeed, the ATT has the potential to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms, through the prevention of their diversion for unauthorized end use and to unauthorized end users and non-State actors. In principle, it could reduce human suffering as well as contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability. As we proceed with our work during this session and as a confidence-building measure, my delegation looks forward to the working group dedicated to discussing the provisions of this landmark Treaty to highlight the need for the continued elaboration of the usefulness of

the ATT for my country, my region, the entire continent of Africa and the world at large.

Finally, Nigeria wishes to highlight the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in terms of their contribution to disarmament measures and other future challenges. My delegation notes the valuable input of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, particularly in its efforts to ensure the provision of a robust programme on capacity-building and in extending technical assistance to many States and to the continent of Africa. My delegation promises to work resolutely towards fulfilling the mandate of the UNDC, as highlighted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We remain hopeful that member States will be flexible as they begin negotiations in the coming days.

Mrs. García Guiza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, allow me to extend condolences to the Russian Federation following the tragic events that occurred on the Saint Petersburg subway system yesterday.

My delegation welcomes the fact that a country from the Latin American and Caribbean region that is committed to disarmament has assumed the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Rest assured, Madam Chair, of Mexico's full support as you carry out your duties.

Mexico aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Mexico remains committed to the issue of nuclear disarmament, which was the subject of resolution 1(1) — the first General Assembly resolution, adopted 71 years ago — and is still on the Organization's agenda. In line with that commitment, Mexico co-sponsored 10 resolutions that were adopted last year by the General Assembly. Four of those resolutions have led to a positive shift in the tone, dynamics and focus with which the issue of nuclear weapons is addressed here at the United Nations. Resolution 71/258 issued the mandate for the holding of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination, which began its work last week.

My delegation welcomes the overwhelming commitment of a large part of the membership of the Organization to participate actively in the first session of that conference. We hope that the momentum generated by the conference will serve to renew interest so that the disarmament machinery can fulfil the mandate conferred on it by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and give new impetus to the Disarmament Commission, allowing it to agree on substantive recommendations, a function that it has not been able to carry out for more than a decade.

For Mexico, the situation concerning the disarmament machinery is unacceptable because it prevents the United Nations from reaching its potential. The disarmament machinery was established as a means and a tool to achieve one objective: international peace and security through disarmament. We must not lose sight of the organic relationship that exists between disarmament and peace. Mexico does not subscribe to the view that weapons provide the foundation for peace.

Throughout history, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have stood out because of their call for nuclear disarmament, which is a task upon which we began to build 50 years ago with the opening for signature of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Treaty of Tlatelolco was a watershed in the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation processes and an inspiration for the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world for the benefit of their populations and regional stability.

Mexico believes that the United Nations must analyse the complexities related to conventional weapons by taking a comprehensive approach that compasses the multiplicity of instruments and the challenges, in particular the illicit trafficking in such weapons, so as to determine the appropriate strategy to counter the diversion of conventional weapons during the coming years and contribute to achieving target 4 of Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mexico welcomes the progress that has been made in the institutional and procedural force of the Arms Trade Treaty. We call on States parties to implement the Treaty at the national and regional levels and to promote its universality. Furthermore, my country

welcomes the fact that the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held last year, agreed on a decisive outcome document that, among other positive aspects, recognizes that effectively controlling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons contributes to sustainable development, the elimination of armed violence and the promotion of international peace and security. Moreover, to that same end, we hope that we can continue to strengthen the regimes established by the respective conventions against conventional weapons of indiscriminate effect, anti-personnel land mines and cluster munitions. We cannot achieve sustainable peace if weapons of indiscriminate effect continue to be allowed to hinder development and the sustainability of societies.

Mexico has maintained that multilateral forums must encourage, not inhibit, discussions and decision-making processes. We hope that the work of the Disarmament Commission at this session will unleash the potential of this deliberative forum by making recommendations that will bring us closer to a more peaceful and secure world.

Mr. Ry Tuy (Cambodia): First of all, I would like to express our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the Russian Federation, the bereaved families and the victims of the terrorist attacks in Saint Petersburg. Cambodia stands firmly and in solidarity with the Russian Federation against global terror.

Allow me to express my congratulations to you, Madam Chair, on assuming the chairmanship of the 2017 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). My delegation believes that, under your able guidance, we will proactively move forward towards fulfilling the mandate of the Commission.

I align myself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

The negotiations conducted through the United Nations multilateral machinery remain important in addressing disarmament matters. Three main bodies need to be given momentum — the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and the General Assembly. The UNDC is a deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral machinery that allows for in-depth discussions on the specific issues relating to disarmament, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. Regrettably, during the past decades, we have been unable to submit such recommendations and, therefore, unable to fulfil the mandate of the Disarmament Commission. It is our collective responsibility to overcome the impasse that has plagued the UNDC since the turn of the century. At this point, in order to achieve such a result, all States Members of the United Nations should show the political will needed to reach an agreement on recommendations. We encourage all Member States to exhibit increased political will, flexibility and cooperation during the new cycle.

For its part, Cambodia reaffirms its principled position on nuclear disarmament and emphasizes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects are essential to strengthening international peace and security and promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels. We emphasize the importance of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in the fulfilment by the nuclear-weapon States of their nuclear-disarmament obligations. Moreover, in view of the central role of the United Nations as a universal multilateral framework for the consideration of disarmament issues, non-proliferation agreements should be addressed through inclusive, open and non-discriminatory processes, and should not impose restrictions on access to the nuclear technology, materials and equipment for peaceful purposes required by developing countries.

While the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of any effort to address nuclear weapons, we must undertake genuine consultations at the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization that will lead to fruitful outcomes for the forthcoming 2020 Review Conference. My country continues to uphold the purposes and principles of the Treaty. Our commitment towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons must be resolute. Our ultimate goal is a world without nuclear weapons. I therefore believe that the negotiations, which took place in the General Assembly last week, aimed at forging an instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons and leading to their total elimination, should be of value for us. Given the concerns about the threats to peace and security that nuclear and missile

tests pose, it is imperative that we work to strengthen the relevant international instruments, including the NPT, and to put the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty into force.

As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Cambodia attaches great importance to the universal validity of this multilateral instrument that bans the development, production, stockpiling, use or transfer of chemical weapons and enhances collective security through the verified elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, the establishment of a national authority in our country is a clear indication of Cambodia's willingness to work cooperatively to strengthen the global chemical-weapons ban. All we need is for the relevant authorities working in this field to build their capacity.

Once again, I would like to underscore the need for everyone to fully support the United Nations Disarmament Commission so that it can effectively implement its mandate.

Mr. Noori (Afghanistan): At the outset, I would like to express our deepest condolences to the delegation of the Russian Federation in connection with the victims of the terrorist attack that occurred yesterday in Saint Petersburg.

Allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as the Chair of the Commission. I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their elections. My delegation is fully committed to the successful fulfilment of the work of the Commission and assures you, Madam, of its full cooperation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We also thank Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his statement (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

My delegation believes in and reiterates its commitment to multilateral diplomacy as a crucial principle for advancing the global disarmament agenda. To achieve the goals of arms control, reduction, disarmament and the total elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, there is an urgent need for all States Members of the United Nations to demonstrate political will in that regard. My delegation has expressed this long-standing position time and again and would like once again to reiterate it today. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, Afghanistan strongly supports all initiatives in the sphere of nuclear disarmament.

Afghanistan is extremely disturbed by the humanitarian threat posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use, intentionally or accidentally. It is for that reason that we welcomed the outcome of the third and final Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which recognized the total elimination of all nuclear weapons as the only definite safeguard against a catastrophic nuclear explosion. We therefore remain cognizant of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, particularly after the human catastrophe that resulted from the nuclear attacks on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. In that context, my delegation has supported the Austrian Pledge announced at the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons.

Afghanistan strongly urges all States to fulfil their international obligations by signing, ratifying and actively supporting all efforts to promote the goals of all multilateral treaties relating to disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In that context, my delegation also condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the nuclear and ballistic-missile tests conducted by North Korea. At the same time, we fully support the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, subject to the verification mechanisms of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

My delegation notes with concern that, despite some positive developments in international diplomacy's efforts to achieve the disarmament of nuclear weapons, we still face threats to human security and sustainability of an unprecedented nature. The global and regional climate of terrorism and violent extremism has made the call for nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction more urgent than ever. Afghanistan has also joined the Group of Friends of Resolution 1540 (2004) and the Group of Friends of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Weapon Risk Mitigation and Security Governance.

Nuclear terrorism remains a matter of serious concern, particularly when nuclear weapons can fall into the hands of terrorists or irresponsible individuals

or groups. We need to identify the areas where individuals or a group are engaged in potential nuclear terrorism activities. In that regard, there is also a need for regulations and capacity-building so that States can identify and prevent such activities.

My delegation remains concerned about the mass illicit trafficking in arms, mainly of small and light weapons, which for decades has enabled terrorists and violent extremists to cause the Afghan people tremendous suffering. It must end. Furthermore, the presence of improvised explosive devices, explosive remnants of war and landmines poses a severe threat to the lives of thousands of people globally and impedes development activities.

My delegation is gravely concerned about the continued use of improvised explosive devices around the globe. Improvised explosive devices are responsible for thousands of civilian casualties every day. They have become the primary weapon for non-State armed groups in many conflicts. Their impact on the security and stability of States is profound, as they not only damage the political, social and economic development of a country but also prevent the ability of necessary humanitarian aid to reach affected areas. Due to the lack of a comprehensive, systematic approach to counter the use of improvised explosive devices, which are relatively simple in their manufacture, acquisition and transfer, my delegation submitted a draft resolution last year that was subsequently adopted by consensus (resolution 71/72).

Pursuant to resolution 71/72, my delegation held informal consultations on 29 March with Member States, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the United Nations Mine Action Service, the World Customs Organization, INTERPOL, the Mines Advisory Group and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank UNODA for establishing, pursuant to resolution 71/72, an online hub to provide impartial, authoritative information relevant to addressing the issue of improvised explosive devices. My delegation will further arrange informal consultations on the follow-up to the resolution and will keep the Member States informed on developments.

The Chair: We have exhausted the list of speakers for the general debate. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that regard, I would like to remind delegations that the number of the interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting is limited to two. The first intervention should be limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to five minutes.

Mr. Mazzeo (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation has requested the floor in right of reply in response to the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom.

Argentina wishes to reiterate the particular situation with regard to the Argentine territory of the Malvinas Islands, in accordance with the interpretative declaration made on 14 December 1999 by the Republic of Argentina at the time of its ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. To date, that declaration has not been amended and remains the main basis for Argentina's extension. The only part of Argentine territory that is affected by anti-personnel mines is the Malvinas. However, Argentina has been prevented from accessing those mines in order to carry out its obligations under the Convention, since that territory, together with the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, has been illegitimately occupied by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and is the subject of a sovereignty dispute. The General Assembly has recognized the existence of a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland pertaining to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas and has urged both Governments to resume negotiations in order to find a peaceful and definitive solution as soon as possible.

The General Assembly has mandated a good-offices mission to be carried out by the Secretary-General to help both parties to fulfil that mandate, which should inform the Assembly on the progress being made. Similarly, the Special Committee on Decolonization adopts an annual draft resolution that states that this special and particular colonial situation must be put to an end through a peaceful and negotiated settlement, and it asks both Governments to resume their negotiations to that end. The Committee adopted its most recent such draft resolution on 23 June 2016.

Despite the repeated statements by the United Nations and other regional and international forums,

the United Kingdom continues to reject renewing such negotiations. With regard to its request for an extension on 1 October 2009, Argentina submitted a schematic framework to implement article 5 of the Ottawa Convention in the contested areas during the 10 years of the extension, if the negotiations with regard to sovereignty by the Republic of Argentina and the United Kingdom were to be renewed and, in that context, both countries were to reach an agreement on the clearance of anti-personnel mines, including unexploded ordnance.

The Republic of Argentina reaffirms its rights of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which are an integral part of its national territory.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The position of the Syrian Arab Republic entails well-known principles. We condemn the use of chemical weapons and all other categories of weapons of mass destruction. In our view, the use of chemical weapons is intolerable, immoral and unacceptable. For that reason, my country is party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and supports the initiative to create a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Ironically, our efforts have been opposed by a number of countries, including France, that seek to protect Israel's chemical, biological and nuclear arsenal. France's statement therefore did not surprise us, because we did not expect that delegation to respect or defend international law, but rather its own strategic interests.

The representative of France is not in a position to make accusations. I would remind him that his country is historically responsible for the Israeli nuclear danger and bears more responsibility than any other State, since France was the first country to provide a nuclear reactor to Israel, which it did in the 1950s at a time when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons did not yet exist. We would hope that the statement of the French delegation, as well as that of other delegations, would denounce crimes that threatened the future of the peoples of the region, as well as international peace and security.

At the beginning of the 1960s, France conducted nuclear tests in Western Sahara using human victims. Indeed, France tied Algerians to pillars that were set up at precise distances from the centre of the explosion. The pretext for doing so was to determine and study the effects of nuclear weapons on living Algerian victims. This is just one example of the crimes that have been perpetrated by France. These are not crimes that should be perpetrated by people who defend or claim to defend international law.

We heard the representative of France say that his country respects non-proliferation. The reality, however, is somewhat different. By way of example, during the past few years, France has welcomed Israeli nuclear-weapons experts and has allowed them to update and develop their own nuclear weapons. I invite the representative of France to read the book by Georges Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot in which the involvement of Laurent Fabius in using chemical weapons, in Damascus in August 2013, is confirmed. France continues to provide information and weapons, including toxic weapons, to terrorist groups in Syria.

Mr. Kim In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to exercise its right of reply with regard to the remarks made by the representatives of Japan, the United Kingdom, France and other countries, who stated that the self-defence measures of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were a provocation and a threat to the region and world peace. My delegation totally rejects those remarks as ridiculous assertions and distortions of reality.

I do not feel any need to repeat the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's principled stance of bolstering its self-defence measures in that regard, but I would like to draw the special attention of the Commission to Japan's remarks.

Japan has neither the qualifications nor the honour to criticize the nuclear and ballistic-missile launch tests of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Japan actively takes part in the hostile policies and nuclear threats of the United States, as well as the blackmailing of my country, under the cloak of Japan's deceptive Three Non-Nuclear Principles. Japan has systematically increased military spending under the pretext of acquiring military muscle commensurate with its economic potential, and has become the country with the highest growth rate in military spending. At the end of last year, the Japanese daily *Mainichi Shimbun* reported that the Japanese Government had decided to allot ¥5.1 trillion to military spending for the 2017 fiscal year.

The current Japanese authorities' ambitions to become an emerging military giant and to launch overseas operations have reached a climax. With a scale of military hardware for self-defence forces as large as that of other global military Powers, Japan is capable of manufacturing nuclear weapons any time it chooses and even has the means for their delivery in place. The operational sphere of the self-defence forces has no geographical limit. According to the revised guidelines for Japan-United States defence cooperation, it has been expanded worldwide.

The self-defence forces have turned into an entirely offensive armed-forces operation, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the primary target. The only reason that Japan continues to provoke us regarding nuclear and ballistic-missile launch tests is to be deceptive — in order to build its military power as an expression of its emerging militarism and aggressive ambitions in Asia. Japan should sincerely apologize for its crime against humanity and its potential crime of becoming a military Power with nuclear ambitions, in the first place.

Ms. Bebbington (United Kingdom): I would like to exercise our right of reply with regard to the statement made by the representative of Argentina.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The principle and the right of self-determination, as set out in Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations and article 1 of the International Covenant On Civil and Political Rights, underlies our position. The United Kingdom is clear that the future of the Falkland Islands should be determined by the people of the Falkland islands, in accordance with our obligations under the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Amiya (Japan): I take the floor in exercise of our right of reply in response to the intervention made by the representative of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We do not need to repeat the position that Japan has taken as a peaceful nation. The claims made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding Japan's self-defence measures are ungrounded.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear-missile development is a clear violation of a series of Security Council resolutions determining that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should abandon all nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes, refrain from any further provocations and fully comply with the relevant Council resolutions and the 2005 Joint Statement of the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks.

Mr. Mazzeo (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I must take the floor again to respond to some of the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom in her right of reply.

The delegation of Argentina wholly reaffirms the statements made by its President before the General Assembly on 20 September 2016 (see A/71/PV.8) and by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship before the Special Committee on Decolonization on 23 June 2016. Argentina reiterates that the principle of the self-determination of nations is entirely and manifestly inapplicable to the dispute between the two countries regarding the sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. Unlike other cases of colonization in which a pre-existing nation is victim of the establishment of colonial domination, none of the resolutions about the question of the Malvinas refer to the principle of self-determination. Moreover, in 1985 the General Assembly rejected two separate amendments that sought to introduce a reference to the principle of self-determination in the resolution on the Malvinas Islands.

Argentina notes that the interests of the residents of those islands and their way of life are adequately addressed by the relevant General Assembly resolutions and by the Constitution of the Republic of Argentina. My country reaffirms its legitimate sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which are an integral part of Argentine national territory.

Mr. Kim In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to exercise its right of reply to address the remarks of the Japanese representative with regard to his characterization of Japan as a peaceful nation.

Let me offer an example. Japan launched an H-IIA rocket carrying a spy satellite from the Tanegashima Space Centre, located in Japan's Kagoshima prefecture, on 17 March. Japanese authorities announced that the satellite was aimed at gathering intelligence on the

ballistic-missile launches of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — itself revealing that it is indeed a spy satellite. The satellite launch conducted by Japan at a time of heightened militarization is yet another chilling testament to its premeditated policy of militarization, and a clear revelation of its ambition to return to Korea.

Its United States ally can develop any missile or launch any spy satellite without a problem, but a country hostile to the United States is not allowed to exercise its right to launch legitimate peaceful satellites — a right recognized by international law. Nothing can justify that faulty logic.

That is why the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has proposed that the legal grounds for the Council sanctions resolutions be clarified through a forum of international legal experts convened for that purpose.

I would like to emphasize once again that we will continue to exercise our legitimate right to develop our self-defence measures, enriching our people with nuclear capabilities, no matter what others may say, and taking shrewd measures to cope with Japan's militarization and its move to realize the ambition of invading us once again.

Ms. Bebbington (United Kingdom): The United Nations has not said that the right to self-determination does not apply to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. In 2003, Argentina attempted to qualify the right of self-determination in cases where there was a territorial dispute, but it was not accepted by the General Assembly Fourth Committee, which reaffirmed that the right to self-determination was a universal right.

Nor has the United Nations said that territorial integrity is more important than self-determination. In 2010, then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that

> "[t]he world's 16 remaining territories that still do not govern themselves must have complete freedom in deciding their future status. It is essential for the people concerned to understand the options regarding their political status and to be able to exercise their right to freely choose their future."

In March 2013, the Falkland Islands referendum reaffirmed the islanders' overwhelming wish to maintain their political status as an overseas territory of the United Kingdom, with 99.8 per cent voting in favour. We shall always defend the right of the Falkland Islands to determine their own political future.

Mr. Amiya (Japan): I would like to reply to the remarks made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Once again, the allegations about Japan's militarization are totally ungrounded. Japan's activities in the field of space development are fully in compliance with the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies and other relevant international agreements, and are strictly for peaceful uses, based on the principles of pacifism enshrined in our Constitution.

It is highly inappropriate to compare Japan with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as the latter has repeatedly conducted missile launches in clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, which prohibit any launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that use ballistic-missile technology. Japan urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the 2005 Joint Statement of the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations A/CN.10/PV.365

General Assembly Official Records

Disarmament Commission
365th meeting
Thursday, 13 April 2017, 3 p.m.
New York

Chair: Ms. Martinic.....(Argentina)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Organization of work

The Chair: Before the Commission takes action on substantive issues, it will revert to item 3, "Organization of work", of its provisional agenda, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.78, in order to elect one remaining officer of the Disarmament Commission.

Election of other officers

The Chair: I have been informed that the Group of African States has endorsed the candidature of Mr. Marius A. C. Loko, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Benin to the United Nations, as Vice-Chair from the Group of African States, the last remaining vacancy in the Bureau.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect Mr. Marius A. C. Loko as Vice-Chair of the Commission of the 2017 substantive session by acclamation. I hear no objection.

It was so decided.

The Chair: On behalf of the Commission, I would like to warmly congratulate the newly elected Vice-Chair of the Commission and to wish him success in discharging his duties.

We have now completed the election of officers of the Disarmament Commission for its 2017 substantive session.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.

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